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THE GREAT WESTERN SERIES.

GOING WEST; OR, THE PERILS OF A POOR BOY.

OUT WEST; OR, ROUGHING IT ON THE GREAT LAKES.

LAKE BREEZES; OR, THE CRUISE OF THE SYLVANIA.

GOING SOUTH; OR, YACHTING ON THE ATLANTIC COAST.

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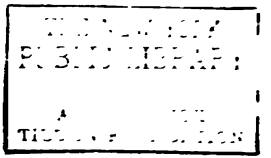

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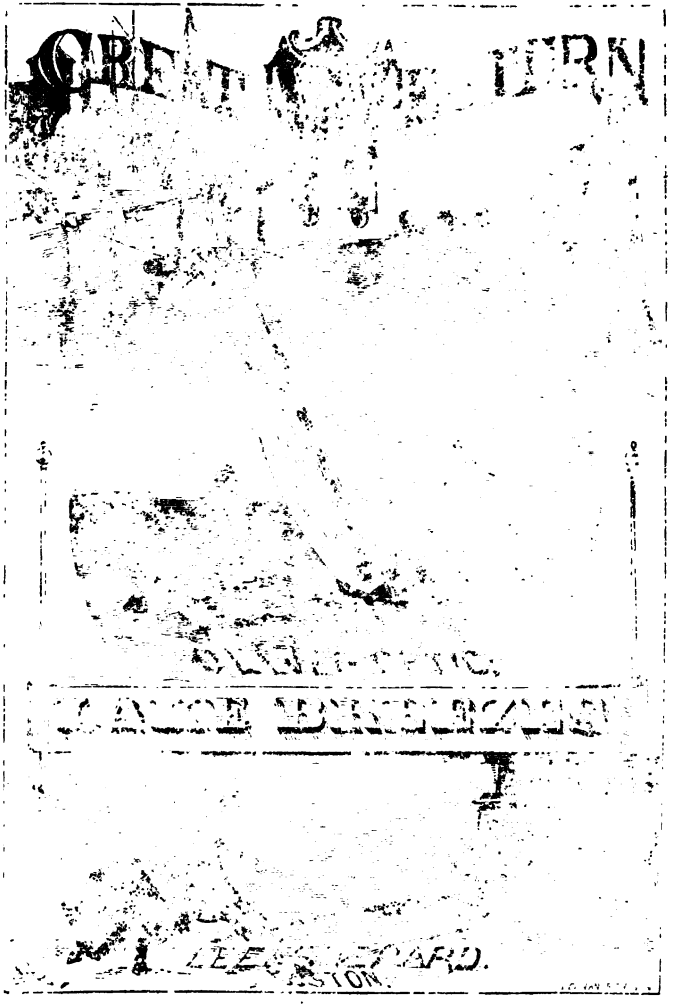

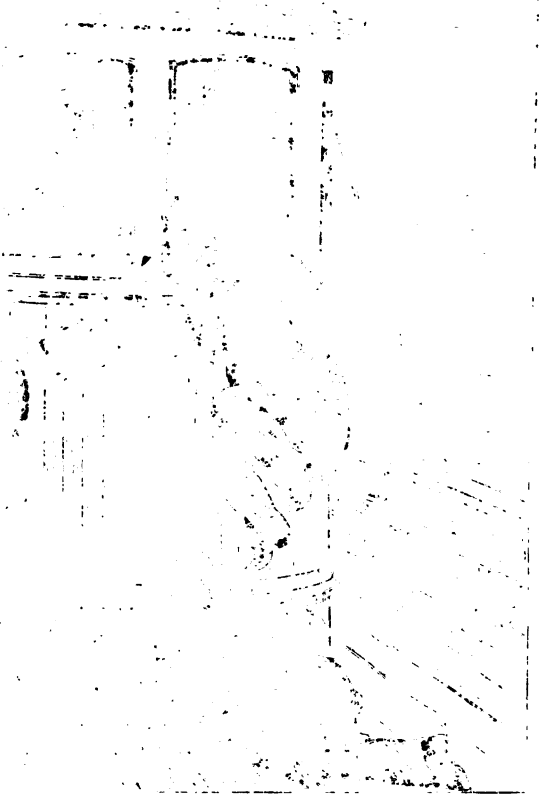

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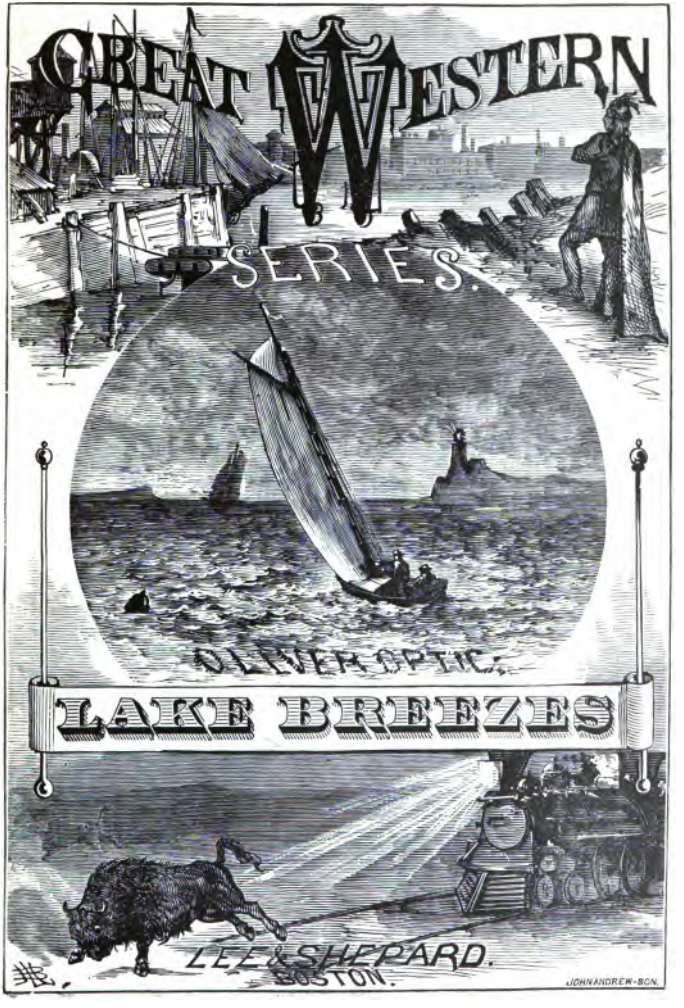
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THE GREAT WESTERN SERIES.

LAKE BREEZES;

OR,

THE CRUISE OF THE SYLVANIA.

BY

OLIVER OPTIC,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD," "THE ARMY AND NAVY SERIES," "THE WOODVILLE STORIES," "THE STARRY FLAG SERIES," "THE BOAT CLUB STORIES," "THE LAKE SHORE SERIES," "THE UPWARD AND ONWARD SERIES," "THE YACHT CLUB SERIES," "RIVERDALE STORIES," ETC.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS.

BOSTON

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TO

My Young Friend,

EDWARD J. ASTON, JR.,

OF ASHEVILLE, N.C.,

This Book is affectionately Dedicated.

PREFACE.

"LAKE BREEZES" is the third volume of the "Great Western Series." The hero who has done duty for the two preceding stories again appears as the leading spirit of the present enterprise on the Great Lakes. But his narrative has no immediate connection with those previously related; and it begins and ends with only a suggestion of the past and of the future, which the reader may follow out or not, as he pleases. Several of the characters before presented to our circle of friends take part in the incidents of the story. They are not "little boys," of whom vigorous actions could hardly be expected, but of an age which justifies them in doing just what such young men have done in real life.

The story is mostly a record of a yachting cruise on the Great Lakes; but simply sailing about, even upon a sheet of water so grand as Lake Superior, may become monotonous, at least in the recital; and in the present instance the young yachtmen had another motive than mere sport and diversion during most of their exciting voyage: it consisted largely in chasing another steam-yacht, which was the twin-sister of the one commanded

by "Captain Alick," and being chased by her when the "boot was on the other leg."

In his rambles in the "Great West," and in his cruisings on the Great Lakes, the writer obtained abundant material for his story, more than he has been able to use; and in the vicinity of the locality of the present story he saw and admired a beautiful steam-yacht, which suggested some of the incidents of this volume.

The moral of the story is not to be found in any set phrase, which may be conveniently skipped by the young reader, intent upon knowing what the hero does, and "how he comes out," but in the general good character of those who challenge his interest and admiration. He will not imitate the example of those whose evil deeds lead him to despise them; and he rejoices when they are justly punished at the end. This is old-fashioned, orthodox story-telling; but, after all, it is the only safe method.

DORCHESTER, MASS., Aug. 1, 1878.

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LAKE BREEZES;

OR,

THE CRUISE OF THE SYLVANIA.

CHAPTER I.

A BITTER COLD NIGHT.

"WAKE up, Alick!"

It was Ellis Dykeman, my room-mate at Somerset College, who spoke; and, as he did so, he shook me vigorously by the arm.

"What's the matter?" I demanded, waking out of the deep sleep into which I had fallen.

"You sleep sounder than a wet brickbat!" exclaimed my bedfellow, as if disgusted with the task of rousing me. "Some one is knocking at the door. Can't you hear it?"

I did hear it now; but I could not very well have heard it when I was sleeping at the rate of twelve knots an hour, with my head buried under

two comforters and four blankets; for it was a bitter cold night.

"Are you awake now?" asked Ellie fretfully.

"Wide awake," I replied.

"Don't you hear that knocking at the door?" he repeated.

"I hear it; but, as you heard it before I did, why didn't you get up and see what was wanted?" I inquired quietly, though I was a little vexed, for my room-mate had a habit of expecting and requiring me to do every thing that had to be done about the premises. "This college don't belong to me any more than it does to you."

"It's none of my affair," he added rather testily.

"Perhaps it is just as much your affair as mine," I suggested. "At any rate, as you heard the knock first, you ought to have got up, and ascertained what was wanted."

Ellis Dykeman knew me very well; and, without saying another word, he got out of bed, and went to the door.

"Here is a note for Captain Alick," said Butts, the janitor and porter, who had to sit up all night, and look after the fires.

"I knew it wasn't any thing to do with me," growled Ellie, as he threw the note on the table, and leaped into bed again, shivering with cold.

"If I had heard the knock I should have got up without waking you; and I think it is about time for you to learn to pull your own oar," I replied, as I got out of bed, and lighted the lamp.

Ellis Dykeman was the son of a very rich man; and he had always had too many servants to wait upon him. I wished to make him do his share of the odd jobs about the room; though I do not think I should have taken it upon myself to reform his ways, if his father had not requested me to do so when he sent his son to Somerset College. But I did not give the question of discipline much thought on the present occasion, for I was wondering who could have sent a note to me at this unseasonable hour of the night.

"What's the matter, Alick?" asked Ellie from beneath the load of bedclothes under which he had buried himself.

"Eva Brickland says her father is very sick, and wishes to see me at once," I replied, as I proceeded to dress myself.

"Can I do any thing for you?"

"Nothing at all, Ellie. I think Mr. Brickland must have been taken very suddenly, for I have not heard that he was sick at all."

"I will get up and go with you," added Ellie, suiting the action to the word.

"You needn't do that, Ellie: you can't help the matter by going with me, and you had better keep warm in bed," I protested.

I took my heavy overcoat from the closet, and put it on. Turning up the collar, I bound a large woollen muffler around it; and then I felt as though I could stand a two-mile walk in zero weather.

"I am sorry I didn't get up when I heard the knock at the door," said Ellie, when I was all ready to leave the room.

I saw that he was touched by the circumstances under which I had been sent for; and I was sorry I had said any thing.

"Never mind that now. It proves to be my affair, as you suggested," I continued.

"But I have a mind to get up and go with you, to punish myself for being so surly."

"A fellow don't always know what to do when he is waked up out of a deep sleep on such a night as this. Stay in bed, Ellie."

"But, if I can do any thing for you, tell me; won't you, Alick?" pleaded Ellie.

"I will; and, if I am not back by the time the bell rings for prayers, I wish you would tell Dr. Rawley why I am absent."

"I will," answered Ellie, as I left the room.

I was very much concerned about Mr. Brickland; and I thought of nothing but the fact that he was sick, — very sick, the note informed me, and I feared that he might be in danger. Next to my father, I regarded him as the best friend I had on earth; and certainly there was nothing I was not willing to do for him. He had assisted me when I needed a friend; and I could not forget the service he had rendered. He was an honest, true, and good man, and I liked him very much, independently of the kindness he had done me.

When I was "going West," accident had brought me to Montomercy, near Lake St. Clair, in Michigan: the town was on Glinten River, which flows into the lake about six miles distant. While living "out West," I had found my father; or, rather, my father had found me, for he had been engaged in a diligent search for me. My earliest years were spent in the poorhouse; and I had fled from

the life of hardship and cruelty to which I had been subjected by the brutal man who had taken me from that institution to work for him.

My father was a wealthy and titled Englishman; and I visited his home in England with him. Before we could return, my grandfather died, and my father became Sir Bent Garningham. He had been an officer of the army before this; and, when we returned to America, he preferred to retain his military title, and he was known simply as Major Garningham.

When he came to Montomercy, I was living with Mr. Brickland, whose ill health and misfortunes had reduced him to poverty and almost to want. I had been able to be of some service to him in the care of his farm; indeed, I had picked up money enough by gardening and fishing in the upper lakes to save him from absolute financial ruin. When my father had established the fact of my relation to him, he was as grateful to Mr. Brickland as I had been. He had built him a fine house, and presented him a considerable sum of money, besides aiding him in other ways.

When I was "going West," I went part of the way in a sail-boat, with Ellie Dykeman, whose

father had presented me the boat, now called the Lakebird, for the service I had rendered his son. I had taken the craft through the entire length of Lake Erie in a violent storm; for I had been to sea, and was skilled in the management of a sail-boat. When the beautiful steam-yacht Sylvania, owned and used by a rich citizen of Detroit, went ashore in a severe hurricane, while the owner and his family were on board, I had gone off to her in the Lakebird, and saved all hands, for which the grateful millionnaire gave me a bill of sale of the steamer; and she was now lying in Glinten River.

During the summer after the return of my father and myself from England, we had made many excursions in this steam-yacht. But my father was anxious that I should pursue my studies; and I had but little time to roam about the lakes, much as I enjoyed the sport. I took charge of the steamer myself, and for this reason I was generally called "Captain Alick;" and I had become so accustomed to the title, that I did not mind it any more than if it had been my baptismal name.

There was an academy, as it was called, in

Montomercy; but it was hardly higher in grade than a common school in the large cities. I did not like to leave my home, for such it had become to me in the truest sense of the word; and my father had contributed a considerable sum of money to the funds of the institution, — enough, in fact, to provide it with the best facilities for obtaining a finished education, as the people of the vicinity understood the matter, though all my father expected was that it would fit me for the university. Dr. Rawley, an eminent scholar and disciplinarian, had been engaged, with a corps of competent assistants. The buildings had been remodelled and refurnished; and the trustees wished to call it "Garningham College." My father was a modest man, and he positively refused to accept the complimentary use of his name; and he suggested "Somerset," which was the name of my mother, instead; and the suggestion was adopted.

Though Mr. Brickland lived within two miles of the college, my father required that I should board at the institution; for, as a military man, he insisted upon discipline. The college was free to all residents of the township of Montomercy, so

far as tuition was concerned; but about sixty students, male and female, mostly from other places, lived in the "Commons," as the great wooden boarding-house was called.

It was now the month of February, and I had been at the college since the preceding October. In December my father went to England to attend to the business of his large estates. As I was doing very well with my studies, he was not willing to have me leave them, though he was sorry to part with me, even for a few months. Before he went, he had heard that a son of his younger brother intended to dispute the right of his newly-discovered son to the title and estates of the Garningham baronetcy. My grandfather had acknowledged me, and so had others interested; but the estates were worth a legal contest, in their opinion.

My father had inherited his mother's property; and this he had turned into American stocks and bonds. Before he departed on his voyage across the ocean, mindful of the uncertainties of human life, he had made Mr. Brickland the trustee of these stocks and bonds, with directions to use the income of them for my support. I was told there

was a hundred thousand dollars in bonds, besides the stocks; and all these securities had been deposited in the vault of the Montomercy Bank for safe-keeping. I had money enough, whatever happened to my father; but I was not allowed to have much of it, for my father believed that "pocket-money" did boys more harm than any thing else. Still, I had all I needed.

It was bitter cold as I walked along the bank of Glinton River towards the house of Mr. Brickland. The next morning the thermometer was ten degrees below zero. With trembling anxiety, I turned into the grounds of the house.

CHAPTER II.

MISCHIEF DONE IN THE NIGHT.

I DREADED the duty before me, for I feared that I might find my good friend in the agonies of death. He had been an invalid for many years; but his health appeared to have been fully restored from the time the sunlight of prosperity dawned upon him. It occurred to me that his old malady had attacked him again, and that he must be in a very bad way; for Mrs. Brickland would not have sent for me on such a bitter cold night unless there had been some terrible emergency.

But I was very much surprised to find that no light appeared at any window in the front of the house. Possibly the sufferer was in the agonies of some nervous disease, and the light could not be borne. I went to the rear; for all the people in the house must be up, and there would be a light in the kitchen, at least. But it was as dark on that side of the house as on the front. I re-

turned to the principal entrance, and rang the bell. No response came to the summons. I rang again and again. At last I saw a light in the room of Mr. Brickland; and presently the window was opened.

"Who's there?" called a voice, which I recognized as that of the invalid himself; and I concluded that he could not be very sick, as the letter stated, if he was able to come to the window on such a night.

"Alick," I replied.

"Alick!" exclaimed the good man. "What in the world are you doing out there this cold night?"

"I thought you were sick," I added, shivering with the cold, as I had before with apprehension.

"Sick, are you? then you mustn't stand out there any longer," he added, mistaking what I said.

The window was closed; a moment later the front door was opened, and I went in.

"What appears to be the matter?" he asked, as he took my cold hand; and his tones were full of sympathy and anxiety.

"Nothing is the matter with me," I continued,

as I followed him into the sitting-room, which felt as warm as an oven to me, coming in out of the cold atmosphere outside.

"I thought you said you were sick; and I supposed you had come home to be attended to," replied Mr. Brickland, in blank amazement.

"No, sir: I came home because I thought you were sick."

"I'm not sick: I was never better in my life."

"Didn't Mrs. Brickland send a note to me?" I asked, taking the billet from my pocket, where I had put it when I left the room at the Commons.

"Send a note to you! I didn't know that she did."

"The note says you are very sick, and asks me to come home at once."

"I'm sure I didn't know I was very sick; and I think there must be some mistake about it."

"What under the sun is the matter?" demanded Mrs. Brickland, entering the room, clothed in shawls and blankets. "Is anybody dead?"

"Not that I know of," replied her husband. "Did you send a note to Alick, saying I was sick, mother?"

"I'm sure I didn't! Why should I, when you are perfectly well?"

I handed her the note. She put on her glasses, and examined it very carefully.

"Eva Brickland never wrote that note in this world!" exclaimed the good lady earnestly. "It isn't her writing any more than it is mine; and, if she had sent you such a note as that, I should have known it."

"It is some trick of those boys in the college," exclaimed Mr. Brickland; "and I should like to horsewhip the fellow that did it!"

By this time I began to see that I was the victim of a practical joke played off upon me by some of my fellow-students. I tried to think who it was; but I could not satisfy myself in regard to the matter. I was about to start on my return to the college, when both Mr. and Mrs. Brickland interposed, and declared that I should not return that night. The good lady went off to make a fire in my room, while I toasted my feet at the stove. In half an hour I was abed and asleep in a much more comfortable room than I had in the Commons.

I was not present at prayers at seven o'clock

the next morning; but I ate my breakfast at about this hour, and started for the village. On my arrival, I found the students at breakfast. Ellie Dykeman had answered for me when my name was called in the chapel; and Dr. Rawley asked me how my guardian was, as soon as I showed myself. I replied that he was quite well now; and fortunately his attention was called away, so that he asked no more questions.

When the students assembled in the school-room, I saw that something was the matter. Dr. Rawley looked very stern and troubled. He stood for a moment looking at the students before he said any thing. Then he intimated that every student knew what the first business of the morning was to be. I was very sure I had no suspicion that it was to be any thing but Latin, which was due at the beginning of the session on that morning.

"I have nothing to say about the absence of one-half of the Commons students from the chapel at prayers this morning," he began; "for the customary signal for rising, and for attendance at prayers, was not given. But the young man or young men, as the case may be, who

turned the bell in the cupola upside down, filled it with water, and permitted the same to freeze there, may now come forward."

No one accepted this invitation; and most of the students looked around among their fellows for any indications of guilt or confession which might appear, but no one made any sign. The doctor had a theory of schoolboy honor which he had labored diligently to put into operation. He expected any one who had committed a fault to inform against himself; which was certainly very pretty in theory, but did not work so well in practice.

"I hope the young man who did this piece of mischief will promptly acknowledge his guilt. It will be vastly better in the end for him to do so," continued Dr. Rawley, after a considerable pause.

But there was no word or sign on the part of any student. Each continued to look at the others as if to discover some sign of guilt.

"I give the culprit, or culprits, five minutes more to consider the matter," said the doctor, glancing at the clock, and then seating himself at his table.

This time passed away in silence.

"The five minutes have passed," said the doctor, rising slowly from his chair. "I regret to see that the perpetrator of this outrage does not intend to pursue a manly course. It would be better for him to acknowledge his fault; for I am happily furnished with the evidence of his guilt, and if he does not instantly rise, and expose himself, I shall call his name."

A momentary silence followed this announcement; but no one availed himself of the instant of grace. The affair was becoming rather exciting, like the last chapter of a story, where the "guilty one" is exposed, and handed over to punishment. I was wondering who he could be, and, like the others, was looking about to discover any pale face and quivering lips. In such a company of young men, there were a few rogues, of course; and I had already made up my mind in regard to the possible conspirators against the well-being of Somerset College. But the doctor did not allow me much longer time to consider this question.

"As the offender does not choose to acknowledge his guilt, I shall be under the painful necessity of calling him to the platform."

The good man paused again, as if he still desired to hold out the offer of mitigated punishment. But the guilty one did not show his hand.

"Alexander Garningham," said the doctor, after he had waited a moment, "you will come upon the platform."

I was utterly astounded at this call, for certainly no one in the room knew less about the freezing-up of the bell than I did. Then it occurred to me, that I had seen two or three of my fellow-students looking at me several times while the question was pending. I could not see why I should be charged with the offence. I had not even been in the Commons when the outrage, as the doctor called it, was committed.

But I was confident I should not be convicted of the offence, for the simple reason that I was not guilty; and I knew that Dr. Rawley intended to be as fair and just as it was possible for a human being to be. I went upon the platform; and I am sure I carried with me no hang-dog expression. I held my head up; and, avoiding any appearance of bravado, I tried to wear the smile delineated in my photograph. When I stood before the doctor, I observed that his face was very

pale, and that there was a tremor about his under lip. I realized that he was more troubled than I was; and I really sympathized with him. He had always been rather reserved towards me, more so than to any other student, I thought; but he was invariably kind and considerate to me. I knew there was no malice or ill-will in his heart toward any person, and certainly not toward me. He was simply doing his duty; and I was confident he was honest and sincere in his belief that I was the transgressor in the present instance.

"Garningham, I am sorry that you did not report yourself when an opportunity was presented for you to do so," said the doctor; and his voice trembled with emotion as he spoke. "Why didn't you rise when I called for the offender?"

"Because I am not the offender, sir," I replied; and I took care that there should be no bravado or defiance in my tones.

"I regret that you are not yet willing to acknowledge your fault," added the principal. "I need not tell you that a falsehood is even more unmanly than the trespass of which you have been guilty."

My blood did begin to boil at this speech, and

I was tempted to utter a vigorous denial of both charges; but I compressed my lips to keep the "mad" under, and determined not to speak except in answer to whatever questions might be put to me. I had fully expected that he would prove me guilty before he accused me of falsehood. Instead of speaking to me any further on the subject of the bell, he turned to the students, and delivered quite a homily on the administration of justice. It was to the effect that offenders, however high in social standing, however wealthy and influential, should be punished for their transgressions. He alluded to a notable instance, in a neighboring State, of a bank officer-who had plundered the institution of which he was the legal guardian, but had escaped the penalty of his crime through the influence of powerful friends. He insisted that even the sentiment of gratitude should not save the guilty. He gave a political illustration of his meaning, alluding to a governor of a distant State who had permitted a guilty official to go unpunished because the chief magistrate was largely indebted to the offender for the high position he held. I wondered what all this had to do with my case.

CHAPTER III.

HEARING THE EVIDENCE.

"ALEXANDER GARNINGHAM, you are the only son of the most munificent patron of Somerset College," continued the doctor, turning to me after he had made a general application of the principle of his discourse; and for the first time I realized that I was to be the subject of the special application. "You have been guilty of an outrage against good order and discipline in Somerset College, an institution which bears the honored name of your mother. I regret the circumstance extremely; but justice must be administered without regard to gratitude, social rank and title, wealth, or influence. Have you any thing to say for yourself?"

"Nothing, except that I am not guilty," I replied firmly but respectfully.

"I regret to hear you deny it again when the evidence is overwhelming. As I said before, your

relation to the practical founder of this institution, as it exists at the present time, must not shield you from just punishment," added the doctor.

It seemed to me just then that I was in a peculiarly perilous position; for the doctor was so fearful of being biased in my favor as "the son of my father," that he was inclined to judge me without trial.

"I expect to be punished if I disobey the rules and regulations of the college, just the same as any other student," I ventured to add, in very respectful tones.

"I am glad to find that degree of submission to constituted authority, Garningham," replied Dr. Rawley. "You have been guilty of a gross breach of discipline, which doubtless you regarded as a good joke, but which, you will permit me to add, is a very old and a very stupid one."

"I intend to submit, guilty or innocent; but I did not even know that the bell of the college had been frozen up till I heard you say so after I came into this room," I protested.

"Young man, do you wish to be formally convicted of this outrage?" demanded the principal sternly.

"Yes, sir, if it is possible," I replied without any hesitation.

"Very well, Garningham: if you really believe you are not guilty, I think we shall be able to convince you, allowing that you are at all reasonable," replied the doctor, chuckling at this mild joke.

He opened his desk, and took therefrom a soiled handkerchief. It looked as though it had been wet since it came from the laundry.

"Will you look at this handkerchief?" continued the doctor, as he handed it to me, very much as though he considered the present proceedings a waste of time, and he was conducting them only to gratify an unreasonable whim of mine.

I took the article, and examined it.

"Whose handkerchief is that?" asked the principal.

"It is mine, sir," I replied promptly.

"Washburn, ask Mr. Butts to step into the schoolroom, and bring with him the bucket," continued Dr. Rawley.

Butts presently appeared in obedience to the summons, carrying a bucket in his hand. The doctor took the handkerchief from my hand, and handed it to the porter.

"Look at it, Mr. Butts, and tell what you know about it," continued the principal.

"It is the one I found in the belfry of the Commons this morning, when I went up to see why the bell wouldn't ring as I pulled the rope," answered the porter. "It had been wet, and was frozen when I found it."

"Are you sure this is the one?"

"The handkerchief I found was marked 'A. G.'"

"Well, what else did you find there?" inquired the doctor, with a yawn, as though the trial was very tedious and a mere formality.

"I found this bucket in the belfry," replied Butts, holding up the implement.

"What is the number on it?"

"Forty-two, sir."

"What is the number of your room, Garningham?"

"Forty-two, sir," I answered, confounded by this array of evidence.

"Is that the bucket from your chamber?"

"I have no doubt of it, sir," I replied; and I was so familiar with the awkward figures of the number on my slop-bucket, that I could not mistake the article.

"Very well, so far. Do you wish to ask the witness any questions, Garningham?" said Dr. Rawley, turning to me.

"I should, sir," I replied; for I was beginning to be very much mystified by the situation.

"You have permission to do so."

"Did you bring me a note in the night?" I asked the porter.

I happened to glance at the principal as I spoke; and I saw that there was a smile on his face, as though he was fully aware what my line of defence would be. I was rather disheartened at this circumstance; for I had calculated from the beginning that my absence from the Commons since midnight would relieve me of all suspicion.

"I did bring a note to your room," answered Butts; but he was a prudent witness, and he said nothing more.

"What time was it?" I proceeded.

"Half-past twelve, by the hall clock."

"Did you see me leave the Commons after that?"

"I did: you went out at the side door shortly after I carried up the note," replied Butts.

"I will save you the time and the trouble of

putting any more questions in that direction," interposed the doctor, "by admitting that you left the Commons in the middle of the night, that you staid at Mr. Brickland's house till morning, and did not return till breakfast was on the table."

I was "taken all aback," as we used to say at sea, by this admission; for I relied upon the fact of my absence from the Commons to convince the principal that I had not frozen up the bell.

"Have you any more questions to put to the janitor?" asked Dr. Rawley triumphantly; though it was the triumph of the logician, rather than of the malicious schoolmaster who takes pleasure in convicting delinquents.

"One more question, if you please," I replied.

"Proceed," added the doctor, nodding at me, and apparently satisfied that he was giving me every possible chance to resist his reasonable conclusion that I was guilty of the outrage.

"Where did you get the note you carried to my room, Mr. Butts?" I asked; and I was assured that this question would lead to a vital point in the argument.

"Found it on the table in the lower hall, where I had put my lantern," answered the janitor.

"How came it on the table?" I asked with considerable energy.

"That's more than I can tell," said Butts, shaking his head, while a sort of a non-committal smile played on his lips.

"I suppose I shall have to answer that question for him, since he appears to be unable to do so himself," added the doctor. "You put the note on the table yourself, Garningham."

"I should like to hear the evidence on that point, sir," I replied.

"Unfortunately, so far as your personal gratification is concerned, there is no evidence on this point. The handkerchief and the bucket, and the fact of your absence from the Commons, are enough to convict you, without proving that you left the note on the janitor's table. Of course the note was a forgery."

"It was, sir; but I have no idea who wrote it."

"I hope you are keeping account of all the falsehoods you are telling in this connection, Garningham," said the doctor sternly.

"I have not told a falsehood since I came into this room," I protested earnestly.

"It is plain to me," continued the principal,

taking no notice of the warmth of my expression, "that the bell was turned, and filled with water, at some time between nine and half-past twelve o'clock. The articles found in the belfry prove that it was done by Garningham. The note was simply a trick to cover up his tracks."

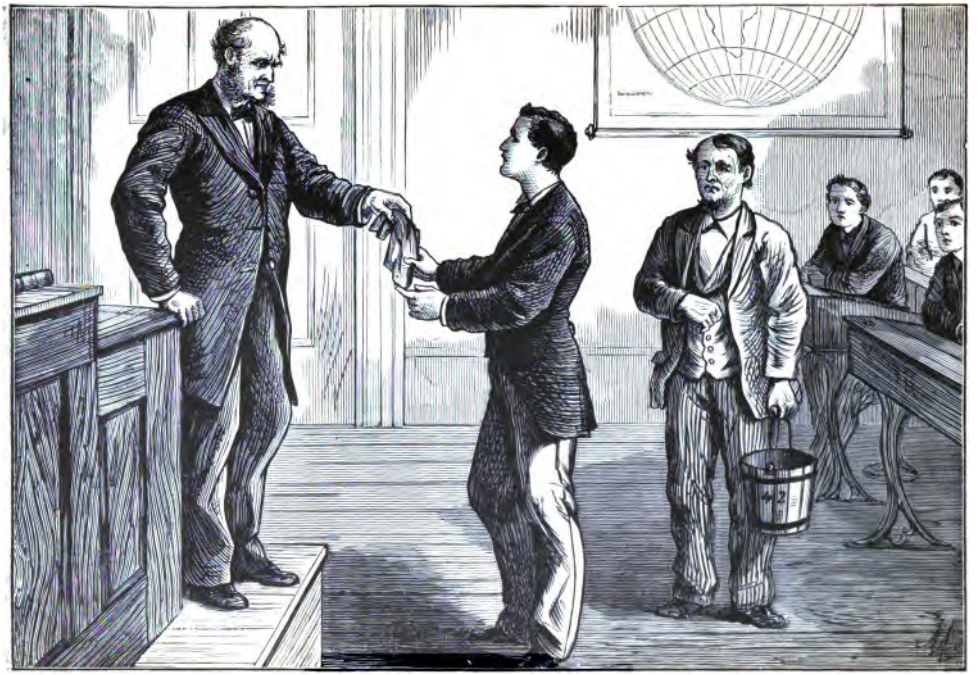
"It was a very stupid trick," I added.

"So it was!" exclaimed the doctor.

"I would rather be convicted of freezing up the bell than of being a liar and a fool," I added. "Of course it would be shown the next day that Mr. Brickland was not sick, and that no note had been sent to me; and I don't like to be thought so stupid as to resort to such a silly trick. If the handkerchief and bucket had been carried to the belfry by me, I should certainly have taken them away with me. I am not an idiot."

I was quite disgusted with the situation; but I had made up my mind to take the penalty, whatever it might be, and I decided to say no more.

"Murder will out," said Dr. Rawley. "I find that people who are very sensible under ordinary circumstances will be very senseless while engaged in doing wrong. Evil-doing seems to impair the judgment. Do you wish to examine any more witnesses, Garningham?"



HEARING THE EVIDENCE. Page 34.

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"No, sir."

"But I should like to be examined," interposed Ellie Dykeman.

"Do you know any thing about this business, Dykeman?" asked the doctor.

"I think I do, sir," replied my room-mate, advancing to the platform.

"Well, what do you know about the matter? You room with Garningham; and, if anybody knows any thing about it, you are the one."

"May I ask a question?" said Ellie.

"Proceed."

"Did I understand you to say that the bell was frozen up between nine and half-past twelve?"

"Such is my conclusion, Dykeman."

"Then I wish to say that Garningham was with me all the time between the hours you name, sir."

"Were you in the belfry with him?"

"No, sir; neither of us was in the belfry;" and Ellie proceeded to testify, in his earnest manner, that we had both been in our room from the time the bell rang to retire at nine in the evening, till the note was brought to the door.

He had missed the bucket when he washed his hands in the evening. The doctor appeared to be

somewhat staggered by the evidence of Ellie, and apparently much more by his earnest manner and air of truthfulness. He questioned him for some time. Other students were examined, but no more evidence could be obtained.

"Do you say, Garningham, that you did not write the note?" said he, turning to me.

"I did not write it," I replied, taking the note from my pocket.

"Is that the note?"

"It is;" and I gave it to him.

He spent some more time in comparing it, with the aid of his assistants, with my writing, as seen in my exercises. It was not mine. The case was postponed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOCTOR'S DOG.

I THINK the argument that had the most weight with Dr. Rawley in the end was the one which had done most to convince him in the beginning of my guilt, — the leaving of the handkerchief and the bucket in the belfry. It looked as though these articles had been purposely left there. After the morning session of the school, the doctor called me into his private office, and had a long talk with me. I told him the truth, as I had before; but I saw that he was still in doubt. I had no means of removing these doubts when we parted: the evidence was not sufficient to acquit or convict me.

I was not well pleased to have even a suspicion hanging over me; but there was no clew by which the guilty one could be approached. I could only hope that the truth would come out after a while; but I could do nothing to bring it out. I concluded

that the whole affair was a practical joke, including the attempt to cast the guilt upon me; and I was willing to believe that it had proved to be a more serious matter than the perpetrator of the joke intended. I was not aware that I had an enemy among the students, and I did not like to think that any one had really meant to get me into trouble.

"Well, I suppose the doctor is satisfied that you didn't freeze up the bell, Captain Alick," said Lynch Braceback, after I came out of the private office.

"I don't think he is satisfied that I did, or did not, do it," I replied.

"I don't believe a fellow in the college thinks you did it, Alick," added Lynch warmly.

"Does a fellow think any one did it?" I asked, laughing.

"Of course some one did it."

"Who was it?"

"How should I know? But I think it was mean to set a trap for you, as the fellow did. Freezing up the bell was a good joke, but the rest of it was rascally."

"I don't see any fun in freezing up the bell,"

added Bob Washburn. "It only gave Butts the trouble of going to all the rooms to call the students."

"I should like to know who set the trap for Captain Alick," said Ellie Dykeman.

"So should I," added Lynch Braceback; "and I will be one to help thrash him within an inch of his life. No meaner thing was ever done."

"Then I think we had better find out," continued Ellie. "Here are four of us; and I move that we form an association of detectives to spot the fellow."

"Good! I am one of the number," exclaimed Lynch.

"And I am another," added Bob Washburn.

"I don't object; but I don't see what we can do about it," I suggested.

"We will meet and talk over the matter," replied Ellie. "Each fellow can keep his eyes and ears open; and, when we get together, we will compare notes."

We met in our room that evening. We had all listened to what had been said by the students, and we put all that we heard together; but when we separated, as the nine-o'clock bell rang, we

were no wiser than before. Lynch Braceback was the most forward in his suggestions; and, without giving any good reason for it, he declared his belief that a student by the name of Monk was the author of the mischief. He was a wild, harum-scarum fellow, full of fun and mischief; but I had never regarded him as a designing knave. I could easily have believed that he froze up the bell, but not that he charged his own offence upon me, for he was a good-hearted and honorable fellow.

We watched Monk during the remainder of the week, but we found nothing to connect him with the affair. Ellie talked with him about it. He did not think it was half so wicked to freeze up the bell as it was to "lay it to another fellow." If he had done it, he would have owned up when it was charged to an innocent person. Our detective association did not amount to any thing; and after a week we discontinued our meetings, for we accomplished nothing to encourage us. We were told that the instructors were comparing the handwriting of the note with that of each of the students; but, if they ever came to any conclusion, we were not informed of it.

About a fortnight after the mischief was done,

it was whispered about that the assistants found a strong resemblance between the capitals in the note and those in the composition of one of the students; but the doctor could not see that the letters were much different from those made by the majority of the class, and would not even let the name of the student be mentioned.

"We are all instructed by the same writing-master, and of course there would be a strong resemblance," said Lynch Braceback, when we were talking over the rumor.

"Whoever he is, the fellow is shrewd, and manages his case extremely well," added Bob Washburn. "I don't believe that cat will ever come out of the bag."

That was just my view of the matter. If there was a student among us who was cunning and artful enough to remain unmoved after all that had been said and done about the bell, I did not care to know him. His very art would lead him to be a thief and a swindler, to say nothing of the meanness of his disposition. This was my thought as I walked home from the college Saturday morning after breakfast; for it was a holiday, when I usually went over to see the Bricklands. As I

jumped over the fence to cross the lot to the road, I saw some one dodge around a corner of one of the out-buildings of the college. I could not make him out, but I judged that he was one of the students from his size and his dress.

My path lay through a little grove of pines. I had hardly got over the fence before I heard a choking sound which startled me. It was attended by the faint sounds of a struggle. I was afraid it might be a human being in distress, and I quickened my pace. A few steps more brought me to a point from which I discovered the origin of the sounds.

Hanging by the neck, suspended to a pine with a piece of bedcord, was Dr. Rawley's dog "Conny," struggling and choking in the agonies of death. I rushed forward, and, taking my knife from my pocket, I cut the rope, holding the animal with my left arm as I did so. I laid the dog on the ground, and he was soon able to recover his breath.

I had hardly accomplished this act of humanity before I heard footsteps near me. At this moment the clock on one of the village churches struck nine. The person approaching was coming through the pines at a hasty pace; but I could not yet see who it was.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY DOG, YOU VILLAIN?" Page 47.

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"What are you doing with my dog, you villain?" demanded the new-comer, in wrathful tones; and I at once recognized the tones of the principal of the college.

"I have been trying to save his life," I replied, not heeding the pet name the good man had applied to me.

"You are trying to kill him!" cried the doctor, coming up to the spot, out of breath with his exertions.

"If that had been my intention, I should not have cut him down," I added gently.

He looked at the knife still in my hand, and then at the dog, whose spasmodic breathing, and the cord around his neck, assured him that I had not done an unfriendly act to the dog.

"I am glad I cut him down, in spite of the hard charge you make against me," I added, as I pointed to the rope in the tree by which the poor beast had been suspended. It had been passed over a branch of the tree, the animal swung up, and the end made fast to a bush.

"Then it was not you that hung him, Garningham?" said the doctor.

"If it had been, I shouldn't have cut him down."

"Who did it?"

"I don't know, sir. As I jumped over the fence to go home, I saw some one dodge behind the out-building, but I could not tell who it was."

"Poor Conny!" said Dr. Rawley, stooping down, and patting the dog on the head. "Did they try to kill you?" Conny wagged his tail; but he was not in condition to be very demonstrative.

"Shall I carry him to the house, sir?" I inquired.

"If you will, it will oblige me very much."

I took the dog in my arms as tenderly as though he had been a baby, and bore him into the library, which was the principal's sanctum, where the dog spent most of his time, for he was not a favorite with the students. No amount of coaxing could make him take the least notice of them, though he was very affectionate to his master.

Dr. Rawley had brought this dog all the way from Constantinople. He was nothing but a cur, and as useless as the majority of dogs; and we all thought it very strange that a learned man like the principal should bestow his affections upon such an ill-favored puppy. I laid the dog on a

sofa, as his master indicated; but by this time he had nearly recovered from the effects of his harsh treatment.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive; and we love those most whom we have served best," said Dr. Rawley, after he had assured himself that the pup was in no danger. "Five years ago I was a missionary in Turkey. On my way home, I stopped in Constantinople several days to wait for the French steamer for Marseilles. One morning, as I stood at the door of the hotel, I saw a little puppy chased by a herd of larger dogs. I suppose the little fellow had intruded upon their territory, and they were chasing him off. I thought he had been punished enough for his temerity, and I interfered to save him from the rage of his tormentors. The dogs turned upon me, and I was severely bitten for my pains. I should have fared worse if some Turks had not come to my assistance.

"The next morning I found this dog at the door of the hotel. He was lank and hungry; and I went to the bake-shop opposite, and obtained a roll for him. Every morning for a week he came to me for his breakfast, and I fed him. Then I took

him to my room; and, when I sailed from Constantinople, I brought the dog with me; and he has been one of my best friends ever since. This is the very dog," he added, pointing to the cur on the sofa. "His name is Constantinople; but I call him Conny for an abbreviation."

"Then I am very glad I saved him. He would have been dead in a minute or two more, sir."

"You will excuse the hasty words I used, Garningham," continued the doctor, taking a note from his pocket. "I was excited; and I think I had reason to believe that you intended to hang my dog."

He handed me the note he had taken from his pocket. It had come by the morning mail, which Butts always carried to the doctor at half-past eight. I read it: "I have just found out that your dog will be hung by a student precisely at nine o'clock on Saturday morning, in the pasture, near the woodsheds. Save him if you can."

This note was evidently written by the same person as that I had received at midnight a fortnight before.

CHAPTER V.

THE BURNING OF THE SHEDS.

"IT does not appear that the writer of this note desired to have my dog destroyed," said Dr. Rawley, after a few moments of consideration. "If he had, he would not have written this note to me."

"What did he desire?" I asked.

"It appears to have been a friendly act on his part; else, why should he have taken the trouble to give me this information?"

"The note is in the same hand as that which was sent to my room at midnight," I added, glancing at the writing again.

"I see that it is, or, at least, that it appears to be. But that is not very strange, since all the students write very nearly the same hand."

By this time Conny had entirely recovered from his choking, and his master affectionately caressed him. I attempted to pat him on the head;

but the brute growled at me, and seemed to be utterly insensible to the feeling of gratitude for the service I had rendered him. I was willing to believe, however, that he was not conscious of the fact that I had saved his life.

I left the doctor's office, and started again to go home. I could not help thinking of the event which had just transpired. It looked to me just as though the author of the note had intended to have the doctor discover me on the spot where Conny was expiating the penalty of his surliness. Every Saturday morning I was in the habit of going home by this path through the pasture. The person who had dodged around the corner, as I jumped over the fence, was undoubtedly the intended executioner of the cur. He had evidently waited, with the rope around the animal's neck, ready to swing him up, till he heard me coming. When he saw or heard me, he had done the deed, and made his escape under cover of the pines, which effectually concealed him till he reached the shelter of the sheds.

I made up my mind, and it seems to me I did not force the conclusion, that I was to be caught on the spot where the dog was hung. I was will-

ing to believe that the plan had not worked in every respect as the conspirator intended; for he could not have meant to give me time enough to cut the dog down before his master appeared. Who was this person that was laboring so diligently to get me into trouble?

When I reached the pasture where the tragedy was acted, I looked about for any thing that would indicate the individual who was plotting against me. I examined the ground for any tracks of the conspirator. But the soil was frozen, though it thawed during the day, and there was no mark on the ground of his footsteps. I followed the path he had taken into the sheds; but they contained no human being.

Dr. Rawley said nothing about this affair in the schoolroom; for, after consultation with the assistants, he decided not to do any thing till he had some evidence to implicate the guilty one. It was plain enough to me that the conspirator had nothing against the dog: the plot was intended to injure me, and not the cur.

I spent my Saturday at home, and returned to the college in the evening. I had a long talk with Mr. Brickland in regard to the matter; and

he advised me to say nothing about it, but to be on the watch all the time. The conspirator had accomplished nothing so far, and it was not likely that he would be satisfied to let me alone for any great length of time. I was content to act on this advice; and for the next two weeks I kept my eyes and ears open. If any unusual event occurred, I began to look for a catastrophe of some sort.

The winter passed away, and the spring came on. I was not involved in any more difficulties; and I hoped my enemy, whoever he was, had concluded to let me alone. But I was mistaken. One evening Lynch Braceback and Bob Washburn were in our room, with Ellie and myself. We had studied the lessons for the next day till eight o'clock, when the wind suddenly breezed up sharp and cold from the north-west. It had been so warm for three days that we needed no fire; but in a short time after the freezing wind began to rattle the windows, we were all very cold; and I did not like to go to bed with my feet like ice. There was no wood in the room; and we began to consider the question as to who should go out to the sheds, and get some.

"Draw lots to see who shall go," suggested Lynch.

"It is either Ellie or I," I added. "This is our room; and we don't expect any outsider to bring wood for us."

"I have no fire in my room, and I should like to get warm before the nine-o'clock bell rings," said Bob; "and I am willing to take my share in the lot."

By this time Lynch had cut three slips of paper of unequal length, for he did not intend to include himself in the lot. He placed them in a book so that the ends looked all alike.

"Here, Captain Alick, you are the skipper, and you shall draw first," said he, as he held the book out. "It is time for me to go home, and I have only a minute to see fair play among you before I go."

I drew out one of the papers.

"That's the longest one!" exclaimed Lynch. "You must get the wood, Captain Alick."

"All right: I am willing to abide by the lot," I replied, taking out my boots from the closet, for I wore thin slippers in the house.

"Good-night, fellows. I must run home as

fast as I can, or my father will give me fits for being out after eight o'clock," added Lynch, rushing out of the room; and we heard his rapid footsteps as he descended the stairs.

"I will get the wood if you don't want to go out," said Ellie. "My slippers are thick enough."

"The lot has fallen on me, and I will get the wood," I replied, as I drew on my boots.

Lynch Braceback was not much of a scholar, and he had come to our room to obtain some assistance in working out a problem in geometry. Ellie had explained the problem to him; but he was so listless and inattentive, that we were both in doubt whether he knew any thing about it in the end.

I went down stairs. In the lower hall I saw the janitor kindling a fire in the stove; for the schoolrooms and halls were kept warm night and day to prevent the ink and the water from freezing.

"Have you any matches, Mr. Butts?" I asked, remembering that my stock in the chamber was exhausted.

"Plenty of them, Captain Alick;" and he gave me a supply.

"It has come up very cold all of a sudden," said he, as I passed on towards the back door.

"I want to make a little fire, and warm my feet before I get into bed."

"It isn't a good plan to go to bed with cold feet," he added.

I went out to the woodsheds in the dark; but I knew just where to find the shavings, the kindlings, and the hard wood. I took a large armful, and a handful of shavings. On my way back, I saw Butts still engaged in his task. He had lighted the fire, and was waiting to see it burn.

"You have company in your room this evening, Captain Alick," said he.

"Only Washburn: Braceback was there, but he went home before I came down," I replied.

"I don't think you have heard of the new rule," said he with a smile.

"What's that?"

"Day-scholars are not allowed in the rooms of the resident students after dark."

"I am sure I never heard of the rule before."

"See here," continued Butts, taking his lantern, and conducting me to a notice posted on the wall near the schoolroom door.

"I never saw it before. How long has it been there?" I asked, after I had read it.

"Nearly a week, I should say."

"Of course Braceback didn't know of the rule, or he would not have come over," I added, as I went up the stairs.

Ellie made a fire in the little stove while I pulled off my boots; and in a few minutes we were toasting our feet in readiness to go to bed when the bell rang; for at quarter past nine every light in the building must be extinguished, except that in the janitor's lantern.

"This is tremendous cold weather for the month of March," said Bob Washburn, as he hitched up closer to the stove. "I believe it is colder here than in the State of Maine, where I come from."

The words were no more than out of his mouth when a bright light flashed in at the windows, and glared upon us as though the house were on fire. My chamber was on the corner at the north end of the Commons. It had two windows, one looking out over the pasture and the pines where poor Conny had almost come to his end, and the other a cross street on which the woodsheds

cornered. The light came in at the latter. We all leaped to our feet the instant the red glare lighted up the room.

"Fire!" exclaimed Bob Washburn.

"Fire!" repeated Ellie, rushing to the window. "Where is it?"

"It is close by us, at any rate," I added, following him.

"It is the woodsheds!" continued Ellie. "And they are all in a light blaze!"

I put on my boots again quicker than I had ever performed the operation before in my life. I rushed down stairs, followed by my companions. By this time not only the Commons, but the whole village, was in commotion. I had been brought up to do my own thinking, and trained to action in emergencies. The sheds — and there was a string of them seventy feet in length — were in a bright blaze, and it was useless to think of putting the fire out. The strong north-west wind drove the flames directly towards the corner of the Commons in which my room was located. The business of the moment was to save the larger and more valuable building.

I saw the burning brands rising from the sheds,

the wind carrying them over the corner of the roof of the Commons. I called to Ellie and Washburn, and they followed me up to the belfry. It was a shingle roof, and not very steep. I walked out on the ridge-pole, and then down to the eaves of the structure, kicking off the brands that were falling at my feet.

Bob followed me out on the ridge-pole: he did not care to trust himself to the sloping sides; but the fire came within his reach, and he rendered good service. I was a sailor: I had been compelled to go aloft on the schooner in which I sailed in the night and the storm; and it was an easy thing for me to handle myself at that height. I saw that Ellie was afraid to trust himself even on the ridge-pole; and I told him to ring the bell as hard as he could, in order to let him feel that he was doing something.

In less than fifteen minutes the sheds were entirely consumed; and, as there was nothing more to burn, the fire went out. Our party staid on the roof till there was no further danger, and then went down into the yard.

CHAPTER VI.

A SEVERE SENTENCE.

BY this time the excitement in the yard had subsided. An engine was playing upon the smouldering remains of the shed, but the building had been entirely destroyed before a machine was ready to work. In half an hour more the crowd, who did not like the feeling of the cold north wind, had left the spot, and most of the students had retired. Ellie and I went to our room. The nine-o'clock bell had not rung, but we went to bed without its assistance.

"Did you hear how the sheds caught fire?" asked my room-mate, after we had turned in.

"I did not," I replied with a gape, for I was beginning to be very sleepy.

No more was said, and I went to sleep. The next morning all the students were talking about the fire, and wondering how it caught. No one seemed to be able to throw any light on the sub-

ject. Several of us asked Butts if he knew any thing about it, but the janitor seemed to avoid any conversation on the subject. He looked very wise, but said nothing. As soon as breakfast was over, the four students who had been in our room together the evening before were summoned to the office of Dr. Rawley. I had no doubt the business of the occasion was in relation to the fire. It was to be a sort of inquest into the cause of the conflagration.

When we reached the office we found the assisttants and Butts there. For my own part, I had hardly thought of the matter. The sheds were never locked, and all the servants from the kitchen went for wood when they wanted it. One of them had probably set a lamp too near the shavings, or Butts had dropped his lantern among them. I was a little perplexed when I saw that only the students who had assembled in No. 42 were summoned to attend the inquest; but I was willing to believe that it was because that room was on the corner nearest to the sheds, and we might be supposed to know more about the fire than any others.

Dr. Rawley looked very stern; but I saw that he was very much troubled, as though the question

before him was a very difficult one to settle. I concluded that he and his assistants had already done something towards working up the case. It was not improbable that they had come to a conclusion, and I thought the doctor was wise in not bringing the matter up before the school.

"Mr. Butts, we are ready to hear what you know about the fire," said the doctor.

"I was making a fire in the lower hall when I saw a strong light at the end window. I went out, and found the sheds were on fire. I threw a bucket of water on the pile of shavings inside, where the fire was breaking out through the side of the building; but it did no good," replied the janitor. "I did all I could in two minutes; and by that time the fire was beyond my control, and was blazing up through the roof. Then I shouted for help. By this time the students from No. 42 came down" — .

"Four of them?" asked Mr. Lawrence, the first assistant.

"No, sir; only three of them. Braceback had gone home a little while before the fire broke out," answered Butts. "It was no use to try to put the fire out, for all the engines in town could

not have done it if they had been on the ground in the first of it."

"Never mind the putting-out of the fire," interposed Dr. Rawley. "We know all about that."

"I was only going to say that Garningham and the other two with him rushed up to the roof of the Commons, and did all they could to keep the building from taking fire. I saw Captain Alick kicking the firebrands off the shingles; and I think the Commons would have been on fire in a few minutes if it hadn't been for him."

"No doubt he did good service; but Garningham seems to appear before us in a double phase," added the doctor.

I wondered what he meant by that.

"Who was the last person that went into the sheds before the fire broke out?" asked the doctor.

"Garningham, sir."

That was what he meant! I was to be charged with setting fire to the building.

"State the facts, if you please, Mr. Butts," continued the doctor.

"Garningham came down, and asked me if I had any matches. I gave him a dozen or so, and

he went out to the sheds for some wood to make his fire. When he came in, I told him about the new rule, and found that he had not noticed the paper posted in the hall. He went up stairs; and in less than five minutes I saw the light of the fire as it broke through the side of the sheds."

"Did any one else go into the sheds about this time?" inquired the doctor, as he glanced at me.

"Not that I know of," replied Butts.

"Where were all the servants?"

"I think they had all gone to bed. When I went into the kitchen after some matches to light the fire in the hall, there was no one there."

"How about the door that opens into the back street?" asked Mr. Lawrence.

"This was locked, as it always is," replied Butts.

"And the window opening into the street?"

"I don't know any thing about that," replied Butts shaking his head. "I only know that I never knew it to be open; and I am sure it has been closed ever since I came here."

"To the best of your knowledge and belief, Garningham was the last person in the sheds before the fire broke out?" continued the doctor.

"Yes, sir; he was," answered Butts, looking on the floor, as if he was not pleased to give testimony against me.

"Braceback, do you know any thing about the fire?" asked Dr. Rawley.

"Nothing at all, sir," replied Lynch. "I heard the alarm after I got into the house; but my father wouldn't let me go out again, and I didn't go to the fire. I didn't even know the wood-sheds were burned till this morning."

"You came down from No. 42 just before the fire; did you not?"

"Yes, sir; but I didn't know there was a rule forbidding day-students going to the rooms in the evening."

"Did you see any fire at the sheds when you came out of the Commons?"

"No, sir: if I had, I should have raised an alarm," replied Lynch, laughing at the seeming absurdity of the question.

"How long after you got into the house was the alarm given?" inquired Mr. Lawrence.

"I don't know, but I should say about five minutes; but it may have been ten."

"You live down the back street, upon which

the door and window of the woodsheds open. Did you see any one about the premises when you went out?"

"Not a soul."

"Which way did you go out of the Commons?" asked the doctor.

"I went out at the end door, and left the yard by the front gate."

"Why didn't you go out at the gate on the back street? It would have been nearer for you."

"I don't know why I didn't, unless it was because I am not in the habit of going out that way," replied Lynch, laughing as though he had given a good answer to a question which was intended to "corner" him.

"On which side of the back street did you walk on your way home?"

"On the side next to the sheds."

"Did you see anybody on that street?"

"No, sir; not a soul."

"Was the door of the sheds open?" demanded Mr. Lawrence, with sudden energy.

"No, sir: both the door and the window were closed."

"Then you noticed that they were closed?"

"Yes, sir: a gust of wind struck me in the face, and I stopped to turn up my coat-collar; and I am sure if they had been open I should have noticed the fact," answered Lynch; and I think he colored a little; but any one might have been flushed under such a cross-fire of questions.

"You feel confident that the door and window were closed, do you?" asked the doctor.

"If they had been open, I am very sure I should have noticed it, for I stopped to fix my collar right in front of the door. I turned towards the door at the time."

"Did you think of the door at the time?"

"No, sir: I was only thinking of getting home without being frozen to death," replied Lynch, shrugging his shoulders.

"You saw no one in that street?"

"No, sir; no one. If there was any person about at the time, he hid himself when I passed."

"That will do, Braceback," added the doctor. "Mr. Butts, how long before the fire was it that you went into the sheds?"

"I didn't go into the sheds at all after dark: I never do. I always get in my wood and kindlings while school is in session," replied the janitor.

"Was any one in the sheds after dark besides Garningham?"

"No, sir: I think not."

"Have you any means of knowing?"

"I know the wood was got for the kitchen before dark; and all the servants say they did not go into the sheds after supper."

Dr. Rawley looked upon the floor, and for a few minutes seemed to be considering the case.

"It appears from the evidence we have heard that Garningham was the only person who went into the sheds after dark," said he, speaking very deliberately; and I saw that he was about to sum up the testimony, and give his conclusion. "Garningham, would you like to ask the witnesses any questions?"

"No, sir," I replied.

I was not a little disgusted with the proceedings, though I did not see how the judge could resist the conclusion which he evidently intended to announce.

"Perhaps it will be well to hear what Washburn and Dykeman know about the matter," added the principal; but they knew nothing which had not already been brought out.

"It appears that Garningham was the only person that went into the sheds after dark; that he obtained some matches from the janitor on his way; and that the fire broke out about five minutes after he left the sheds," continued Dr. Rawley, resuming his judicial air. "I do not see how we can resist the conclusion that Garningham set the building on fire."

I made no protest against this conclusion. I knew, if no one else did, that I did not set the fire. I felt a sort of pride in my innocence, which would not permit me to speak. I was asked if I had any thing to say, and I answered in the negative.

"As you do not even deny the charge, I adjudge you guilty; and the penalty is expulsion," added the doctor.

I was formally expelled!

CHAPTER VII.

A NEEDY PROFESSOR.

IT seemed just a little odd that I should be expelled from the college my father had so largely endowed for my especial benefit. For the third time I had been placed in a false position; and it was again evident that I had a very cunning enemy near me all the time. Some one had set the sheds on fire: I had not done it; but it was certain the incendiary intended that I should be charged with the act. Whoever he was, his plot had been a success this time.

The burning of the sheds was a criminal offence, and it was possible that the conspirator intended to have me convicted by the court of the offence; but, after I had fully considered the case, I did not believe that the charge could be proved. It had not even been conclusively shown that the building was set on fire by any person; and all the evidence against me was the fact that

I had obtained some matches of the janitor, and had been the last person in the sheds before the fire broke out. Of course it was possible that some person on the outside of the house had done the deed.

But, after all my reflection, I was forced to say that the appearances were against me. I was not even sure that a court of justice would not convict me of the crime. Lynch Braceback would testify that he had passed down the back street only a few moments before the fire broke out, and had seen no person near the spot. I knew that I was innocent; and this feeling gave me a sort of pride which I could not repress. I was very anxious to have my character vindicated; and I was willing to use every effort in my power to bring about this result.

I was not permitted to see any of my companions, for they had to attend to their studies. I thought it possible, that, if we could get together, we might obtain some clew to the conspirator, though our experience as detectives had not been such as to afford me any substantial encouragement. A silence long enough to permit me to think a few moments had followed the sentence

of the doctor. I saw that the worthy principal trembled with emotion, though he spoke with something like desperation in his manner when he uttered the final words. He did not like to send me away from the college; but my position was peculiar, and he felt that he must be impartial. I have no doubt it had been hinted to him that he could not punish the son of the benefactor of the institution; and he was struggling to be just against any odds. But, whatever else I did, I determined not to resent his severity. He had tried to do right; but his fear of doing wrong had led him into the very error he had striven to avoid.

"You have heard the sentence, Garningham," said Dr. Rawley, when he had in some measure recovered his self-possession. "You are no longer a member of this institution."

"I will leave at once, sir," I replied, rising from my chair, and moving towards the door of the office.

"The other students may return to their duties," continued the doctor.

I left the office, hoping to meet my room-mate before I left the college; but I saw nothing more

of him. I went to my room, and packed up my clothes and other articles belonging to me. I could hardly believe that I had been expelled from Somerset College, which had been revived and invigorated for my benefit. But I did not think I should remain long away from it; for I was confident that my innocence would be made apparent in some manner within a few days, or at most a few weeks.

Butts was very kind and sympathetic: he was evidently very sorry for me, even while he could not help believing that I was guilty of the charge upon which I had been expelled. I did not blame him, after the consideration the authorities had given to the matter, for he could hardly help the conclusion he had reached.

He offered to carry my bundles for me; but I declined his kind offices, fearful that he might be blamed for his good-will towards a convicted and expelled student. I walked up to the store where Mr. Brickland bought his goods, and left my packages, intending to come for them with a wagon some other time. I felt like a waif on the sea of existence again, as when I was wandering from the persecutions of my former guardian.

I was not guilty; and I could not explain how it was that I did not like to meet the people in Montomercy, with whom I had been rather a favorite, if I may judge from the notice they took of me. I found myself trying to avoid the familiar faces I should gladly have confronted under other circumstances. The storekeeper looked at me more attentively, I thought, than usual, and it seemed to me at that moment just as though he believed me guilty of some crime. But he said nothing, and smiled as sweetly as ever. I did not feel right at all.

Next to the store was the bank, with which my father had done a great deal of business; but I was not inclined to enter, though it was one of my usual "loafing" places when I had nothing to do, and was waiting about the town. The cashier was always very civil to me; but, as he happened to pass me at the entrance of the bank, I thought he looked more stern than usual, as though he had heard of my discharge at the college. Innocent as I was, I could not escape these strong imaginings.

As I passed the barn on my way to the river road which led to Mr. Brickland's house, I noticed

a very seedy-looking man, who halted as I approached. He was a stranger to me; but, as he looked as though he intended to accost me, I slackened my pace. I thought he might wish to ask me a question, perhaps to find some place, or the residence of some one in town.

"Excuse me," said the stranger, with a great deal of embarrassment in his manner, "but may I speak to you for a moment?"

"To be sure you may: this is a free country," I replied.

"It is free to those who have money enough to pay for the necessities of life," he added, with a sickly smile.

"And just as free for all others: they may go where they please, and do what they like, if they don't break the laws."

"How can a hungry man get any thing to eat without breaking the laws?" he asked, with a great deal of bitterness in his tone.

"That's a conundrum," I answered; "and there are a great many ways to do it; but the best way I know of is to go to work, earn some money, and buy something to eat."

"But if one can obtain no work?" he added

quite earnestly. "But excuse me: we seem to attract attention. Will you do me the favor to retire to some less exposed place?"

In spite of myself, I felt an interest in the stranger, perhaps because he appeared to have been unfortunate, like myself. I led the way to the rear of the store, where there were some sheds used by the country people for their horses when they came to town to buy goods. I found a bench in one of these, on which we seated ourselves, though I noticed that he shivered with the cold.

"If one cannot obtain work?" he repeated, as he seated himself on the bench.

"There are always people enough who are willing to feed the hungry," I suggested.

"Where are they? can you point me out such a person?" he demanded eagerly.

"I think if you should apply to any house in the town, you could get something to eat," I replied, looking at the stranger.

He was a man of not more than thirty-five, if he was as old as that. His clothes had formerly been of good quality, though their day of service for a genteel person was well-nigh passed. I

could see that he had made an effort to keep himself tidy on a dearth of material.

"Young man, I spoke to you rather than to an older person in the street, because you have not had your sympathies blunted by too much contact with a cold world," said the stranger impressively.

"If I can do any thing for you, I should be glad to do it," I replied.

"Possibly a young man like you may not be as likely to have any money in his pocket as an older one," he added.

"I have money," I replied; and I happened to have over five dollars in my pocket at that moment. "But I thought you wanted something to eat."

"That is what I want; and money will buy it," said he, with a sort of desperation. "I am not a beggar; and between going to a door, and begging for something to eat, and starving to death, there is little to choose with me. Young man, I am a gentleman: I was a college professor less than three months ago."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, rather startled by the announcement.

"Circumstances beyond my control, and for which I was not responsible, threw me out of my position; and since that I have been like Cain, a wanderer upon the face of the earth."

I saw him wipe a tear from his eye, while another stole down his wan face. It was too much for me. I pulled out my wallet, and took from it a dollar. I tendered it to him, and he took it with something like the clutch of a maniac.

"I thank you, young man. Your face did not belie your heart," said he, as he thrust the dollar into his vest-pocket, and rose from his seat.

"Where are you going now?" I asked.

"To the hotel; they will give me a breakfast, if I pay for it in advance," he replied, as he moved towards the street.

"And you say you have been a professor in a college?" I continued; for I wanted to know more about him.

I wondered whether or not he had been accused of setting fire to the college sheds, and expelled for it. He was a castaway, as I felt that I was myself; and my sympathies went out to him.

"I have been; but I am hungry now, and you will pardon me if I hasten to the hotel," he replied.

"Certainly," I answered; and I saw that a hungry man could not feel much like telling the history of his misfortunes on an empty stomach. "But may I not see you again? I am interested in you."

"I thank you, and I shall be happy to meet you again."

"One question more: in what college were you a professor?"

He would only whisper it in my ear, but it was one of the most celebrated in the land. I detained him no longer, and he disappeared at the corner of the street. I walked home, and the Bricklands were not a little astonished to see me. When I told them I was not guilty of the crime for which I had been expelled, they all seemed to believe me. Nothing more was said about the affair at the time. In the middle of the afternoon, I went up to town with the horse and wagon, for my clothes and books.

As I was driving back, I saw the college professor so drunk he could hardly walk.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN HONEST CONFESSION.

OF course I realized, when I saw the professor in such a condition that he could not navigate, that my dollar had been put to a bad use; and I was correspondingly indignant. I was inclined to hail him, and reproach him soundly for the use he had made of the money; but it was foolish to talk to a tipsy man, and I said nothing. The professor — if he was a professor, and I began to have some grave doubts on the subject — saw me in the wagon, and spoke to me.

"I want to see you, young man," shouted he. "I agreed to meet you again; and I always keep my word when it is practicable to do so."

"Never mind it now," I replied. "I think you must have eaten too much dinner, for you don't seem to be very well."

"Too much dinner? No, sir! that's not it: I have drunk too much whiskey. Call things by their right names, young man. I am drunk!"

"I should say that was about the right name for it, professor," I replied.

"So it is," he added, staggering into the street where I had stopped the horse. "I want to talk to you; for you are a young man with a good heart. You are willing to help the needy."

"I'm not as willing as I was; and I think I shall be a little careful how I do it the next time."

"I see what you mean, young man; but I forgive you."

"I don't ask to be forgiven."

"But I want to see you. I warn you against the practice of drinking intoxicating drinks. It is a very bad habit to get into; and I advise you, as one who knows all about it, never drink a drop of any thing."

"I shall never do it; and I think I am a better person to advise you on this subject than you are to warn me," I answered, somewhat amused at the novelty of his position.

"You don't know any thing at all about it; and I know all about it. Those who have suffered most from the habit are the best qualified to warn others. One that knows what he is talking about is better than one who don't know. A man that

don't understand any Latin is not the right one to hear you recite from Virgil."

"I think I should rather hear you at some other time," I answered.

"When I'm not drunk, you mean?"

"Yes: that is what I mean. Where are you going now?"

"Nowhere: I have no place to go to. I have spent the dollar you loaned me, half for a breakfast, and half for whiskey. I am almost sober now; and the next thing will be for me to find where I shall get my next drink," said he, leaning against the wheel of the wagon.

"Where are you going to sleep to-night?"

"In any shed or barn which happens to have the door left open. Perhaps I may have to sleep on the ground."

"But you will sleep your last sleep if you do so in this cold weather," I suggested, rather moved by his homeless condition.

"So much the better!" exclaimed he. "The only hope for me in this world is death."

But I saw that a crowd was gathering around the wagon, and I was not anxious to be the centre of observation at the present time.

"I must go home now. Won't you ride with me a short distance?" I asked.

He made no verbal answer, but attempted to get into the wagon, though he did not succeed till he was assisted by Butts, who happened to be in the street at the time. I helped him to a seat at my side. He seemed to be very weak, and he was able to control his speech much better than his limbs. I drove down the river road; and my passenger held on with both hands, for the way was very rough in the spring of the year. He could not talk under these circumstances, and I asked him no more questions.

But I did not like the idea of taking him to the house of Mr. Brickland, for I feared his good lady would object to receiving such a guest. I felt an interest in the man, in spite of the manner in which he had expended the dollar. Tipsy as he was, his language and pronunciation were correct. I desired to know his history; for he had been driven from one college, and I from another. It was a cold snap just then, and I was afraid he would be frozen to death if he was not taken care of. It occurred to me that he could be quartered on board of the Sylvania without much danger of

doing her any harm. I often slept on board of her myself, and I could make the professor as comfortable as he would be in the house.

I drove to the landing-place. My passenger seemed to be nearly frozen, for the ride of two miles had chilled him through. He was but poorly clad, and had no overcoat: he told me afterwards that he had sold it to obtain whiskey. With my assistance he alighted from the wagon; and I conducted him to the pilot-house, from which a door led into the captain's room. I had a little stove in the former, and I made a fire in it. In a few moments the apartment was warm enough, and I left my passenger in order to put up the horse. I put my books and clothes on board of the steamer, for I thought I should spend most of my time there during the period of my suspension; for I did not think it would amount to expulsion in the end, by whatever name it was called.

The Sylvania had been frozen up all winter in the river; but a recent thaw and blow had cleaned out the ice, and she was afloat in clear water, moored to the little wharf I had built for her. She was eighty-six feet long by sixteen feet beam. Next to my own room was that of the engineers.

in which I thought I could bestow my passenger. But I intended to remain on board myself, for I would not trust a man of his habits alone in her.

Even while the beautiful vessel was frozen up, I had entertained my friends on board; for we all enjoyed being in the cabin and pilot-house when it was too cold to be out doors. I had cooked many a dinner and supper on board while she lay in the ice; and I had a plentiful supply of provisions in the hold and ice-house: I had bacon, potatoes, ship-bread, salt fish, pork, and groceries; so that I could have fed a ship's company very well for a week or more.

After I had put up the horse, I told the folks in the house that I should stay on board of the Sylvania, as I often did; and no questions were asked. I returned to the steamer, and found my passenger had gone to sleep on the bench near the stove. I did not wake him, for I thought that rest of this kind would do him more good than any thing else. I went out to the galley, and made a fire in the cook-stove; for I did not suppose my guest had eaten any thing since his breakfast, and it was now four o'clock in the afternoon. I put on a kettle of potatoes, and cut a slice of ham

ready to be fried for his supper. By the time I had done this, the professor awoke without any help from me.

My passenger seemed to be entirely sober, and looked around the pilot-house as though he did not fully comprehend how he happened to be there. He asked me a great many questions about the Sylvania, which I answered.

"Do you live on board of her?" he asked, when I had given him the history of the beautiful craft.

"No, sir; only for a few days at a time, for the fun of it. But I will stay on board with you while you remain."

"Thank you, young man. Will you oblige me with your name?"

"Alexander Garningham; but I am generally called Alick by my friends."

"I am one of your friends, and I shall call you Alick. Is there any cold water on board?" he asked, looking about him.

"Plenty of it, sir;" and I brought him a pitcher from the bucket I had filled in the forenoon.

"Thank you, Alick," said he, when he had taken a long draught.

"Will you oblige me with your name, professor?" I continued, thinking that one good turn deserved another.

"Certainly, Alick: my name is —— Buckminster," he replied, stumbling when he came to the name.

"Buckminster!" I exclaimed. "Are you related to Alfred Buckminister, who lives on the Hudson?"

This was the name of the gentleman whose daughter I had saved when she fell overboard at the pier in New York City, who had given me a suit of clothes and some money, and had wished to do a great deal more for me.

"I am a relative of his," replied the professor; but I thought he was a little startled when I mentioned the name. "Why do you ask?"

"For nothing: only I happen to know this gentleman. I met him a few years ago. But you haven't been to dinner, Mr. Buckminster?"

"No: I seldom eat more than one meal a day, and sometimes not even one," he replied with something like a shudder; but I thought it was caused by his pride rather than by his hunger.

"I will have some dinner ready for you in a

few minutes. The potatoes are boiling now," I replied, as I rose to return to the galley.

"I need not give you all this trouble, Alick. Perhaps you had better give me another dollar, if you have one, and let me leave you forever."

"No: I will not give you another dollar, though I have one; but I will give you a dinner, and make you as comfortable as I can while you stay on board of the Sylvania."

I did not wait for his answer, but went out to the galley, where I found that the potatoes were nearly done. I set the table on the sideboard in the kitchen, for this was where the hands usually took their meals when we were out on the lakes. I cooked the ham as nicely as I could, and poured off the coffee. The table was well garnished with small dishes of bread, butter, pickles, and other relishes; and I was not ashamed of the board to which I invited the professor. At first he said he had no appetite; but he ate like a hungry man, after all. He declared that the coffee was as good as he ever drank in his life, and he had lived a year in Paris.

"Alick, I am very grateful to you for all this, and I hope the time will come when I shall be

able to repay you for all your kindness. No! it will never come: I shall never be any thing but what I am now," he exclaimed.

"You said you were discharged from your position as a professor in the college on account of circumstances entirely beyond your own control," I added, wishing to change the subject of the conversation.

"That was what I said," he replied bitterly.

"Do you object to stating what those circumstances were? I was expelled from Somerset College just before I met you this morning; and our circumstances seem to be somewhat alike."

"Not at all alike," he protested emphatically. "You were expelled for some college prank: I was discharged for — for drunkenness!"

I could not understand him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TROUBLE AT THE BANK.

"CIRCUMSTANCES beyond his control!" This was what Professor Buckminster called drunkenness. I did not comprehend him, and I asked for an explanation.

"My father was as good a man as ever lived," said he, fixing his gaze intently upon me, as though he meant all he said; "but unhappily he was addicted to the use of intoxicating drinks, which caused his death in misery and disgrace in the end, as it will mine in a few months or weeks. I shall be found dead, before many days, by the roadside."

"I hope not," I added, shocked by his words.

"It is impossible to avoid the end. I inherited my father's love of strong drink. The excitement of it is necessary to my existence. I am no more responsible for it than I am for the shape of my nose."

"You could not help drinking when you were a professor in the college?" I inquired, not quite willing to accept his theory.

"Certainly not. It was a part of my nature to drink. My father was a great scholar. I inherited his aptness to learn, his memory, his ingenuity; in a word, his talents. It is no credit to me that I was the best scholar in my class in college, for I inherited my brains. In the same manner I inherited this curse of an appetite for drink, and it is no fault of mine. When I was discharged from my high position as a professor, it was as much a part of my destiny as it was for me to obtain the situation."

I realized that he was thoroughly in earnest, and fully believed the theory he advanced. For my own part, I was very much in doubt whether his conclusion was a correct one.

"Did you ever try to stop drinking?" I asked.

"Many and many a time; but I might as well have attempted to arrest the current of Niagara," he replied with energy.

"What do you do when you are out of money, and can't obtain any liquor?" I asked, very much interested in his case.

"I suffer all the tortures of the criminal on the rack. But I have always managed in some way to obtain liquor after a few hours' abstinence, as I did when I met you this morning."

"If I were in your place, I should stop drinking, whatever broke," I added.

"You do not understand the matter," he protested. "You have no idea of this infernal appetite."

"When I knew it was killing me, I should do without it. I should be sure, if I didn't drink the next glass of whiskey, that I should be all right."

"You are a child in this matter; and may God keep you always a child in it! You have no gnawing at your vitals."

"Do you have any just now?" I inquired.

"Not at this moment," he replied with a faint smile, "for I have just finished a hearty dinner; but as soon as my stomach begins to be empty there will be a pain there, and I must drink whiskey to allay it."

"We won't let the stomach get empty again," I added, laughing. "You shall stay with me for a while, professor, if you are willing."

"I am willing and glad to do so, if the fierce promptings of this demon of appetite do not drive me away from you."

"Do you really wish to cure yourself of this habit? Are you willing to make an effort to do so?"

"Is the drowning man willing to be saved? Is the wretch who is enduring the pangs of the most intense suffering, moral as well as physical, willing to be relieved? I am willing to make an effort," he replied with energy. "I suffer a thousand times more from the disgrace in which I am plunged than from cold and hunger."

"Then we will begin to do something now," I continued. "I am only a boy, and I don't know much more about this matter than what you have told me; but I think you and I together can cast out this devil."

"I am afraid there is no hope," said he with a sigh. "I have tried many times."

"Perhaps you had no help, or not the right kind."

"I never had any help, for I would never allow anybody to talk to me about the matter."

"I don't know any thing about the case, as you

say; but I knew a man once who inherited the rheumatism from his mother, and it certainly was not his fault that he had the rheumatism; but this did not prevent him from doing something to ease the pain, and cure the disease. I think it would have been just as sensible for him to have given up, and took the grinding pain as it came, because he was no more responsible for it than he was for the shape of his nose, as it is to say you can't stop drinking because your father died of intemperance."

"You are a bold young man to talk to me like that."

"I don't see any thing to be afraid of. I do not see any reason why you should take another glass of liquor, any more than that I should do so."

"How can I stop it?" he asked blankly.

"Don't take any more: that's all I know about it. If you say that you will make the effort, I will do all I can to help you, professor."

"I will make the effort if you will permit me to remain on board of this vessel."

"I will; and I will see that you have enough to eat, and are kept warm and comfortable."

"A thousand thanks! I have not known what it was to be regularly fed, and to be warm for more than an hour or two at a time, for months."

He gaped and yawned while he was speaking; and I concluded that his full stomach made him sleepy. He told me he had walked nearly the whole of the night before. He could obtain no whiskey, and he was obliged to keep moving to avoid being frozen. He had walked all the way from one of the New-England States. He was a "tramp," in fact. He told me he had fled from the college as soon as his disgrace was made public. He had a little money, and had kept himself intoxicated for a whole week, though he was not so drunk that he could not walk. When his money was exhausted, he had sold his watch, and then the contents of the little bundle of clothes he had carried in his hands. He would not ride, lest he should meet some one that knew him. At Port Huron he had sold his overcoat on one of the mild days of the spring; but he had spent his last penny long before he reached Montomercy.

He had never begged when not absolutely suffering for food. He was not going anywhere; he had no end or object in view; he expected to

perish with cold and hunger in the course of a few weeks. He seemed to have no strength of mind left to resist the fate he anticipated. He had plenty of pride left, and declared that he would die rather than return to his friends in the East, though they were willing to do every thing in the world for him.

As he continued to gape, I concluded that the best thing for him would be a good bed, and I prepared the room of the engineers for him. He was glad enough to retire, though it was not yet dark. I insisted that he should undress himself, and I put plenty of blankets on him. He was asleep before I left the room, and I went out, closing the door after me.

I had some very decided views in regard to my passenger. I was confident that I could keep him sober long enough to let him know how it felt, for he told me he had always drank liquor since he left college as a student. He had not passed a day without drinking up to the time of his expulsion, except at the times when he tried to cure himself of the habit; and he had never succeeded in refraining from the use of the cup for more than two or three days.

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As soon as he was asleep, I called Dick Blister, who lived with Mr. Brickland, taking care of the cattle and doing the work about the house. With his assistance, I carried the heavy anchor out into the middle of the river in the tender, and dropped it overboard. Casting off the fasts which secured the Sylvania to the wharf, the current carried her out into the stream till the cable attached to the anchor brought her up. Thus moored, she lay about three hundred feet from the shore.

"What's all that for?" asked Dick Blister, when the work was done.

"I have a passenger on board," I replied; "and I don't want him to leave during the night."

"I heard you had a rum customer on board," laughed Dick. "Have you seen Mr. Brickland since supper?"

"I have not."

"He was looking for you; and he seems to be in a big stew about something," added Dick.

"What's the matter?"

"I haven't the least idea; but he had some company this afternoon."

I wondered what had happened to disturb Mr. Brickland. Very likely some one from town had

been down to see him about my case. I had told him my story; but he appeared to think that I told the truth, and I had not brought forward any argument in my defence. I returned to the shore with Dick, anxious to know what had occurred to excite my worthy friend. We left no boat at the steamer; and the professor could not get ashore if he should happen to wake in my absence.

I found Mr. Brickland in the sitting-room. He was considerably excited, and I thought it quite probable that some one had been telling bad stories about me. Very likely the day scholars had gone home, and informed their parents that I had been expelled; and the story had been exaggerated, as such things always are.

"What's the matter, uncle Brickland?" I asked, using the familiar appellation by which I often addressed him.

"I didn't say that any thing was the matter," he replied with his accustomed smile.

"Has any one been here telling bad stories about me?" I continued.

"No: why do you ask such a question? I never knew you to tell a lie yet, and I believe all

you said about the fire at the college last night; and I should believe it if the whole town came down to tell me it wasn't so. Who told you that any thing was the matter?"

"Dick said you wanted to see me; and I concluded it was about the fire last night."

"Nothing of the sort. They say there have been at least three attempts made within a couple of months to rob the Montomercy Bank, and the last of them was made last night."

"I hadn't heard a word about it. Do they suspect any body?"

"No; they kept still about it for fear it might injure the bank. This afternoon Captain Green called upon me: he is one of the directors, and he notified me that the package in the vault which contains your bonds is kept there on my responsibility. If the bank should be robbed, the loss would be mine, or rather yours. I was much alarmed about it, and since supper I have been for the package. And now the question is, what shall be done with them?"

This was a hard question, and I was not ready to answer it.

CHAPTER X.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

AS I have said before, this package contained over a hundred thousand dollars in bonds, which were the same as money, besides other securities. If any thing should happen to my father's estates on the other side of the ocean, this would be all the fortune that would come to me. It was enough, as I understood the matter; and I did not wish to lose it.

For two months I had not heard a word from my father, though before that time I had a letter every week. I could not think what had become of him. His relations were contesting the question of the succession of the title, or some matter which affected it. His last letter was hopeful, and I had hardly given the matter a thought since.

"If it should be known that this package is in the house, it would certainly be broken into,"

said Mr. Brickland, with considerable excitement and even agitation.

"It need not be known," I replied.

"But it is already known to a few persons; and it does not take long for such things to be discovered by the whole town."

"Where is the package now?" I asked.

"It is in my desk; but that is no place for it."

"I think it would be the safest on board of the steamer," I suggested. "I have anchored her in the middle of the river, and I intend to sleep on board of her every night."

"What is that for?" inquired Mr. Brickland.

I explained that I intended to prevent Professor Buckminster from drinking any more liquor; and, if I could keep him sober, I meant to continue my studies under his direction. The good man approved this plan under my present circumstances; for he knew that my father would not be willing I should neglect preparation for college. Before he went away, it was understood that I should make a cruise in the Sylvania during the months of July and August; but I was to do my best with my studies till that time.

"If you can't keep this man in a condition to

instruct you, another person must be employed for the purpose," said Mr. Brickland. "I have been thinking ever since you came home, what I should do with you. Your father would never forgive you or me if your education is neglected."

"I don't mean to neglect it. Mr. Buckminster is a great scholar; and, as long as I can keep him on board of the Sylvania, he must be sober."

"We will consider that settled for the present. But what shall we do with the package? Another attempt was made last night to break into the bank, though they have a man to sleep in it every night."

"Who sleeps there?" I asked, for I had not heard of this fact before.

"Captain Braceback: he has had nothing to do since he lost his place as commander of the Sylvania. He came to Montomercy because he could live cheaper here than in Detroit. They say he is poor, and has hard work to get along."

"I don't think he can be very poor, or he would not be able to pay his son's tuition at Somerset College," I added.

"I only know what Captain Green says about it. He told me that Braceback had been looking

for work of some kind since he came to Montomercy. They pay him a dollar a night for watching the bank, or for sleeping in it. Green says this is all he has to live on."

"I should think the robbers would know that some one slept in the bank; at any rate, if they have tried three times, they must have found it out by this time."

"I never heard a word about the matter till Captain Green called upon me to-day. It seems that when the first attempt to break in was made, Captain Braceback suggested to the president that some one ought to sleep in the bank; and, as he had nothing to do, he offered to stay there for a dollar a night. Some of the directors thought it was a needless expense after a while, and wanted to save it: but, soon after, another attempt was made to get in. An auger-bit was found on the ground, and a hole near the fastening of one of the shutters. Braceback said he fired a shot out the window, and this scared the robbers away."

"Did he fire at any one last night?" I asked, considerably interested in the account.

"He says he fired twice at three men, who ran down the river road. They left some tools near

the window, and had begun to bore the shutter again."

"Of course the robbers must know that a man sleeps in the bank."

"Bank-robbers are generally desperate characters; and I have no doubt, if they only got into the building, they would make an end of Captain Braceback very quick. I shouldn't want to be in his place."

"The president seems to believe in Captain Braceback," I added; and I was thinking of something I could not well define.

"I have no doubt Captain Braceback is a good man. The president is a retired steamboat-captain, and Braceback was the mate of his boat."

"But what is to be done with the package? Don't you think it will be safest on board of the Sylvania if I sleep on board every night?" I continued, returning to the "question before the house."

"No, I don't, Alick. In addition to the danger of the package being stolen, it may be burned up or sunk, if any thing happens to the boat," replied Mr. Brickland, shaking his head.

"And so the house may be burned."

"If it is, what's left of it won't go to the bottom of the river or the lake."

I had to admit the force of his reasoning. We talked about the matter half an hour longer, and then concluded to bury the treasure at the bottom of the cellar, where it could not be burned with the house, and where, as no one but Mr. Brickland and myself, not even Mrs. Brickland, knew it was there, it was not likely to be stolen. We wrapped the package in oil-cloth, so that the dampness would not injure it, and then dug a hole two feet deep to receive it. When we had filled it up, we carefully removed all the spare earth, relaid the bricks we had taken up, and then covered the spot with barrels of potatoes. I was very confident that no one would think of digging in that place any more than in another for the treasure.

Mrs. Brickland and all the rest of the family were up stairs while we were at work. I had walked around the house before the job was begun in order to satisfy myself that none of the neighbors or others were near enough to look in at the cellar windows. More depended upon the secrecy of our proceedings than upon any other circumstance. I was confident that we had done exceed-

ingly well, and that the treasure was safer than if it had been in the vault of the bank. When we had finished, I hastened back to the steamer, fearful that my passenger had waked, though he could not get ashore. It was now about half-past seven in the evening. I went out at the side door, and I had hardly closed it behind me before I saw a form approaching me in the darkness.

"Is that you, Captain Alick?" said Lynch Braceback, stepping up to me at this moment.

"Is that you, Lynch?" I replied; and I was greatly relieved to find that it was he, for I had feared some one had been spying about the house while we were at work in the cellar.

I noticed that he was not in the path when I first saw him, but appeared to come out from behind a clump of shrubs that grew near the corner of the house.

"I was just going up to the front door to ring the bell when I heard you come out," he added.

This explained how he happened to be out of the path, for that circumstance had troubled me for an instant. He had crossed the lawn from the path to the front door to that leading to the side door.

"What are you doing down here so late in the evening, Lynch?" I asked.

"My father went over to the bank as soon as he had his supper to-night; and I wanted to see you," he replied; and I thought he stammered a little.

"I have to go on board of the steamer now," I added, wishing he had staid at home.

"All right: I will go with you. My father would kill me if he knew I was out," said Lynch lightly, as though he had done a good thing in evading his vigilance. "I couldn't wait till morning before I saw you; and I came down."

"I see you did," I continued, as we walked towards the wharf.

"The fellows are almost in rebellion at the college because you were expelled," rattled Lynch, talking as rapidly as he could. "Ellie says he shall write to his father to take him away from the college, and Bob Washburn says the same. My father told me a week ago that he couldn't afford to pay my bills any longer; and so I shall leave. That will make four of us out."

"I hope the fellows won't make a tempest about the matter. Dr. Rawley did what he believed was

right; and I am as sure as I can be that it will all come out right in the end," I interposed.

"Not a fellow in the school believes that you set the woodsheds on fire," protested Lynch.

"I don't believe it myself; but it won't do any good to get up a tempest about it."

"I don't know about that. If Dr. Rawley loses three scholars by his way of doing business, it will open his eyes."

"You said you were to leave because your father couldn't afford to pay your bills," I suggested.

"I don't tell that to any fellow but you; and I didn't want to leave till you were expelled. I shall let Dr. Rawley believe that I leave because he turned you out for nothing," said Lynch glibly, as though he thought he was doing me a great favor.

"I don't believe in any such fraud as that!" I exclaimed indignantly. "I am in favor of telling the truth, hit where it may."

"But it is the truth; for I think my father would pay my bills as long as I wanted to stay. I shall not go any more after this week," added Lynch. "The fellows are trying to find out who it was that set the sheds on fire."

"Well, is there any chance of their doing so?"

"They haven't got ahead any yet; but I have a notion of my own about it. Some men tried to get into the bank again last night; and I believe they set the sheds on fire."

"Why should they do it?" I asked.

"So as to get all the people away from the bank: don't you see?"

"But your father was at the bank when the men tried to get into it."

"I know he was. I went up to bed as soon as I got in; and I suppose he went to the bank right off. I think he didn't get into the bank before he fired at the men. I believe these men set the sheds on fire so as to get my father and others away from the bank."

This was mere supposition; and I did not think it was likely to relieve me of the odium of the charge on which I had been expelled. Lynch got into the boat with me, and we went on board of the Sylvania. I found the professor planking the deck.

CHAPTER XI.

FITTING FOR COLLEGE.

PROFESSOR BUCKMINSTER seemed to be very nervous, and I jumped at the conclusion that he was suffering for the want of liquor. I had talked with Mr. Brickland about this matter, and he had told me what to do. His wife had given me a quantity of wormwood, which I proceeded to steep at the galley. My patient knew all about wormwood, and he took it when I brought it to him in the pilot-house.

Lynch Braceback staid with me in the galley while I got some tea and toast for the professor. I could not yet make out what his particular business with me was, though I supposed it was to inform me what "our fellows" thought of the expulsion. He had always been an exceedingly good friend of mine, in spite of my unpleasant relations with his father. After the wreck of the Sylvania, when I saved all on board, I had in-

curred the enmity of Captain Braceback. I had been to sea enough to know how to handle a vessel in a storm, and something I said convinced the owner of the little steamer that her misfortune had resulted entirely from bad management on the part of the captain. Since he had lived in Montomercy the captain would not speak to me, or even look at me. I knew that he hated me as badly as it was possible for a man to hate a boy.

But Lynch was one of my best friends, and appeared to be willing to do any thing to serve me. I concluded that he had come over simply to express his sympathy with me, and his indignation at the treatment I had received at the hands of Dr. Rawley. But I was very unwilling that any tempest should be created in the college on my account, for I was still confident that time would do me ample justice. I told Lynch how I felt about it, and asked him to tell Ellie Dykeman and Bob Washburn not to leave the school on my account. He promised to do so, and I pulled him ashore after I had set my guest's supper before him.

Professor Buckminster ate very heartily of the simple meal I had prepared for him, and as I had

not had my supper I joined him. He told me he felt better than at any time before for months. While his stomach was full, he did not hanker so fiercely for liquor. When the meal was finished, I cleared away the dishes. The captain's state-room was abundantly heated from the stove in the pilot-house, and we seated ourselves in that apartment.

"I think I should have gone ashore when I waked, if there had been any means for doing so," said he. "I felt the need of whiskey. I see you have moved the steamer out from the shore; and I suppose you have done it to keep me from leaving you."

"I am willing to own that this was the reason," I replied; "for I want to save you if it is possible to do so."

"I will try to work with you; for I feel more hope now than for months before. But I am not willing that you should be my servant, as it were, and cook and wait upon me. I will do that myself. I know I should feel better if I had some work to do."

"I think so myself, sir; but I am willing to do the cooking, for I have something better for you to do."

"What is it?" he asked with interest.

In reply I told him about my difficulties at the college. He took a deep interest in the case, and asked me a great many questions relating to my own and the conduct of others in the matter. In the course of the evening, I related to him the whole of my eventful history since I first came to consciousness in Glossenbury. It was eleven o'clock when the conference ended.

"But you have not told me what work I am to do," said he, when I had risen to retire.

"I have told you that my father desires to fit me for college; and I have just been expelled from the school he endowed for my benefit," I replied. "I want to continue my studies, and do the most I can in the next three months."

"That is telling me what work you have to do, but not what I am to do," added the professor.

"I want you to instruct me, sir," I answered, surprised that he did not see what I was driving at.

"To serve as your private tutor: very well; I am willing to do so. You will not be the first private pupil I have instructed. I have received a thousand dollars a year for taking care of a

single scholar; and I fitted one of only fair ability in a year so that he entered without a condition, and went into the first half of the freshman class. But, Alick, I fear that I shall not be able to let whiskey alone," said he, shaking his head mournfully.

"If you will leave that to me, I will try to keep you away from it."

"I will leave it to you, Alick; and I will not complain of any thing you do. As I am to be your master in the studies, you shall be mine in the conduct of life."

"Do you feel as though you wanted any liquor to-night?" I asked.

"No: just at this moment I loathe the thought of it," protested he. "But if I should wake in the night when my stomach is empty, a certain gnawing pain, which I cannot describe, will take hold of me; and that is the time I want whiskey."

"But it will be easy enough to fill up the stomach," I suggested. "You have eaten so late in the evening that I think you can hardly be hungry before morning."

"I may sleep soundly all night," he added.

He rose and went to the engineer's room, which

I had assigned to his use. I made some more wormwood-tea, and placed it, with a plate of ship-bread, near the head of his berth. I had heard of the gnawing of the drunkard's appetite; and Mrs. Brickland had told me that wormwood-tea and food, if the sufferer could eat it, were the best remedies. The professor thanked me very warmly for the service, and assured me he should be able to take care of himself by the next day.

I did not hear from him during the night, and when I got up in the morning he appeared to be still asleep. I went on shore, and procured some fresh provisions at the house, which I proceeded to cook for breakfast as soon as I returned. Before my patient got out of his berth, I carried him a cup of hot coffee. He told me he had been awake but once in the night, and had taken the wormwood-tea, which seemed to quiet his nerves, and enable him to go to sleep again. He felt better than he had for many a day before. After breakfast, which we had about seven o'clock, and I had washed the dishes, we went to work on the studies. The professor seemed to be a different man as soon as he was at work. He was full of fire and energy; and I could see that he must

have been a very valuable instructor to the college in which he had been engaged. He spent the whole forenoon in examining me in the various branches; and then bestowed a very high compliment upon Somerset College for the thoroughness of its instruction. He did not find it necessary to "put me back" in any thing. I was very much delighted with the result of the examination, simply because it had realized my expectations. I had been one of first scholars in the college; and it would have been a damper to fall below the standard of my new instructor.

I immediately went to work in earnest; and, for three months from that time, Professor Buckminster did not put his foot on the shore. After a couple of weeks of abstinence, he assured me that he had no desire for whiskey. Early in May, when the pleasant weather came, we got up steam on the Sylvania, and ran down to the lake, where we anchored half a mile from the land, but in a sheltered place where the storms could not seriously affect us. I took the Lakebird with me, so that I could run up to Montomercy as occasion should require. The professor and I became fast friends. He stimulated me to the most tremen-

dous exertion in my studies; and I was surprised at my own progress. I am sure I did better than I should if I had remained in Somerset College; but this was owing to the extraordinary efficiency of my teacher.

Every afternoon my tutor and myself took our exercise, either in rowing the boat, or in sailing the Lakebird. We had various gymnastic apparatus on board, which we had bought or made; and, in spite of the hard work we did, it would have been difficult to find a more robust couple of students. I had sent to Detroit for all the books the professor wanted, for Mr. Brickland had plenty of money in his hands for my use.

I heard very little from Somerset College, though Ellie and Bob came down to see me once in a while. They remained in the college, though Lynch left at the end of the week on which I was expelled. They were all very much dissatisfied, and were to leave the institution at the end of the spring term.

The treasure we had hidden in the cellar remained there; but we heard of no more attempts to rob the Montomercy Bank.

Although my life on board the steamer, an-

chored out in the lake, was full of incident to me, I shall pass over it to the beginning of the summer vacation. Bob Washburn and Ellie Dykeman had obtained the consent of their parents to go with me during the "cruise of the Sylvania," which was to last two months. The professor and I had lived a week in the Lakebird, for I had taken the steamer to Detroit to be hauled up, and put in condition for the voyage. Moses Brickland, the son of my good friend, was the regular engineer; and he went on board for the summer when we sailed from Detroit.

I anchored off the mouth of Glinten River on the morning of the last day of the term of Somerset College. We lay there over night, and the next morning I brought my friends with their "bags and baggage," down to the lake in the sailboat. But I was obliged to run the Sylvania up the river in order to take on board the provisions which Mr. Brickland had purchased from the list I made out.

My friends came on board, and I sent the Lakebird back by Ben Bowman, who was to act as assistant-engineer and deck-hand. We went into the pilot-house to talk over the details of the pro-

posed cruise. I was, of course, to be the captain of the craft; but the others wanted some regular duty assigned to them.

"We can't all be officers," I said laughing; for I feared they might have some hard feeling if I gave one a higher place than the others.

"We don't all want to be officers," replied Bob; "at least, I don't want to be one."

"Nor I," added Ellie.

"Of course I don't ask for any such position," followed Lynch. "I am glad enough of the chance to go, even as cook's assistant."

"We want a mate and two deck-hands to make the thing all regular," I added; but I was still bothered to know who should be the mate.

"We will leave that all to you, Captain Alick; and we will all agree to do just what we are told," protested Bob.

The others assented to this proposition; but I was still unwilling to place one of them over the others. While we were talking about it, Moses came in to say that a steamer was close by, headed for Glinten River.

CHAPTER XII.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

"SHE looks just like the Sylvania!" exclaimed Moses Brickland, when he brought the information in regard to the approaching steamer.

"Where is she from?" I inquired.

"She is coming up from the southward; and I think she is from Detroit," replied Moses.

I knew of no steamer that had any business up Glinten River, and my curiosity was excited. I hastened on deck, and found that the engineer had not overstated the truth. The approaching steamer was as near like the Sylvania as one pea is like another. I had heard of another steamer of which the Sylvania was the counterpart; but I had never seen her. She was said to be owned by a gentleman who lived on an island in Lake Erie; and I thought it strange that she had never been up into Lake St. Clair during the years I had lived at Montomercy. The Sylvania had

been built after the other, and it was affirmed that she was an improvement in some respects upon her twin sister, though the outward resemblance had not been destroyed.

"She looks exactly like us!" exclaimed Bob Washburn. "I think she must have been cast in the same mould."

"I have heard something about her, but I never saw her before," I added. "She is exactly our style; and we couldn't tell one vessel from the other in a fog."

"Hardly in a clear day," said Ellie, who was carefully examining the beautiful craft, as she shot by the Sylvania.

"Don't you know about that steamer?" asked Lynch Braceback, after we had looked at her a while.

None of us knew any thing about her except what I have already stated.

"I know all about her," added Lynch. "My father is to sail her this summer."

"What is her name?" inquired Ellie.

"She is called the Islander; and her owner is Col. Ingersoll, a very wealthy gentleman from Cincinnati, who lives on an island he owns in Lake Erie."

"What is she doing up Glinten River?" I asked, as the steamer ran into the stream.

"She has been fixed up this spring; and I suppose father has gone up to the house to get his clothes, and perhaps to show off the steamer to the people of Montomercy. They say she is faster than the Sylvania."

"Who says so?" I asked, with no little interest; for I had heard that just the opposite was the fact.

"Father says so, for one; but I don't know any thing about it, except what he says," replied Lynch.

"How long will she remain at Montomercy?" asked Bob Washburn.

"Not long: father went down to take charge of her only yesterday morning."

"I should think he would want you to go with him," suggested Ellie.

"That is the very thing he don't want; for he would never let me go with him in the Sylvania when he was her sailing-master. Besides, I would rather go with our fellows, than with the crowd they will have in the Islander," answered Lynch.

Of course we were all duly flattered by the

compliment he paid to his companions. The steamer had disappeared beyond the banks of the river, and we returned to the pilot-house to discuss the interesting question which had occupied our attention when we were interrupted. So far as I could see, any one of my friends was as well qualified to be the mate of the steamer as either of the others. I rather preferred Ellie, perhaps for the reason that I had known him longer. They insisted that I should make the selection myself, without regard to their wishes, and give the place to the one I considered the most competent.

"I do not know that one is any more competent than the others," I replied.

"Then I will tell you how we can settle the question," said Ellie, laughing. "Let us draw lots for the place, just as we have always settled difficult questions."

"That's the idea!" exclaimed Bob. "We don't want Captain Alick to feel that we are jealous of each other, or that any fellow will not be satisfied if he is not the mate of the Sylvania."

I was pleased with the suggestion; and I took three matches from the safe, and, breaking them

off at unequal lengths, I placed them between my thumb and finger so that they could see only the ends.

"The one that draws the longest stick shall be the mate of the Sylvania," I continued.

"That's fair!" exclaimed Ellie. "I don't think any one of us is inclined to break things if he don't get the position of mate."

"Certainly not; but Captain Alick don't feel like deciding this question, and the lot will relieve him of the necessity of doing so. I am sure we shall all be satisfied with the result," added Bob Washburn.

"Of course we shall," said Lynch heartily.

"Then draw; and I don't think either of you can tell by the looks of the ends of these matches which is the longest one," I continued, as I held out the sticks to Ellie.

He drew one, Bob drew another, and Lynch took the last. They then laid the sticks on the table; and it was found that Lynch Braceback had drawn the longest. I was very sorry the lot had resulted in this way; but I could raise no objection to it. My lucky companion was as well qualified for the position as either of the others,

though personally he was not as satisfactory to me as either Bob or Ellie would have been.

"That question is settled," said Bob, laughing; and he was a fellow so unselfish, that I don't believe he was at all disappointed.

"And nothing more need be said about it," added Ellie. "I congratulate you, Lynch."

"But I shall not take the position," protested the new mate. "I don't think I am entitled to it."

"You are as much entitled to it as any other fellow; and I, for one, don't believe in going behind the lot."

"But I won't take it: it wouldn't be right for me to do so," persisted Lynch. "I am a sort of guest of Captain Alick; and I am sure I am very much obliged to him for letting me go on the cruise, without taking the softest place on board."

"We are all sort of guests," laughed Ellie. "I am sure I don't claim any rights on board of this craft; and I think Lynch has as good a right to the position as any other fellow: so we won't say any thing more about it."

"As we all agreed to the lot, we ought to be

bound by its decision," added Bob, as he and Ellie walked out of the pilot-house, as if for the purpose of ending the discussion.

"I don't feel a bit like taking this place," said Lynch, as if he were appealing to me from the decision of his companions. "I know that Bob and Ellie don't want me to be mate."

"They don't say so," I replied.

"Of course they will not say so."

"We all agreed to the lot; and they are not the fellows to go back on any thing to which they have agreed."

"But I would rather be a foremast hand than to have them angry and jealous of me. I didn't expect the position, and I shall be just as well satisfied if one of them has the place."

"They will not be angry or jealous. You needn't disturb yourself about that. But we have to go up the river, and we won't talk any more about it now," I continued, leading the way out of the pilot-house. "You will see to getting the anchor up, Mr. Lynch."

"Mr. Lynch!" shouted the mate. "You are beginning to make fun of me already."

"Not at all," I protested. "The mate of a

vessel is always called Mr.; and it is no more making game of him to call him so than it is to address the commander as captain."

Lynch Braceback looked a little suspicious as he called all hands to get up the anchor. My friends had been with me enough in the Sylvania to be thoroughly acquainted with their duties; and at the call of the mate they took their stations at the windlass. The machinery was of the most approved pattern, and the anchor was easily raised from the sand at the bottom by the mate and his companions. Moses Brickland had steam up, and was at the engine.

"Anchor's a-weigh, sir!" cried the mate, when the iron was clear of the bottom.

I rang one bell, to go ahead slowly, and the Sylvania began to move. The mate got the anchor up to the cat-head, and stowed it, for we had no use for it at the landing-place up the river. Our provisions and stores were all on the wharf, near Mr. Brickland's house. My companions did not come near me again on the trip up to the town. I saw that they were talking together on the forecastle; and, as Lynch seemed to do most of the talking, I concluded that he was

still protesting against the decision of the lot. I was willing to let my friends settle the matter among themselves.

At last Ellie and Bob seemed to be tired of the discussion; and both of them became rather energetic in their manner. Finally they left the mate alone on the forecastle, retreating to the pilot-house to escape further words. In half an hour we were in sight of the town; and I saw that the Islander had made a landing at Mr. Brickland's wharf. The water was rather shoal in some places above, and I concluded that Captain Braceback was afraid of getting aground if he went farther up. But he had run his craft up to the end of the pier, so that there was room enough for me to place the Sylvania in her usual position alongside.

I saw that Mr. Brickland was on the wharf; and I concluded that he had given his permission for the Islander to take in her stores there, if she had any to take in, and to remain there while the commander visited his family, which was doubtless the object of his visit. As soon as we had made the steamer fast to the wharf, Lynch asked permission to go home and see his father and mother

before he sailed on the cruise, which was likely to be continued for the next two months. Of course I had no objection to so reasonable a request. For the next two hours we were all busy in getting our provisions on board.

All the Brickland family were gathered on the wharf or on board of the Sylvania to see the operation of taking in cargo. The house was quite deserted. Before eleven o'clock every thing was in readiness for a start. We had taken in our beef, pork, vegetables, and ice, and stowed them all away in the proper places. When the work had been satisfactorily completed, I went up to the house to get my best clothes, for I thought I might want to go to church in some of the places where we stopped.

On my way up to the house I met Lynch and his father on their return to the wharf. Captain Braceback did not speak to me, or even nod at me, as he had not since his residence in Montomercy. But Lynch stopped to ask me if all was ready. He had several bundles in his hands; and I could not help noticing that he was somewhat embarrassed about something. I concluded

that it was the chilly conduct of his father that troubled him; and I continued on my way.

I went down cellar to see that the hidden treasure was safe. It was gone!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SPOTS UPON THE MATE.

I SUPPOSE I went down cellar for the same reason that I had done so a hundred times since the hidden treasure was deposited there. I had always found it right before; and I expected to find it right this time. The barrels of vegetables had stood on the brick pavement over the spot where the valuables were concealed; and I had intended to go only far enough to satisfy myself that they had not been disturbed. But, as soon as I had descended the stairs far enough to obtain a view of the interior of the cellar, I saw at once that the barrels had been moved.

My heart leaped up into my throat. I suddenly felt that earthly treasures may take to themselves wings, and fly away. Though my father was an English nobleman, and a very wealthy man, I had placed my main dependence upon the securities which had been concealed in the cellar of Mr.

Brickland's house. I had them, and I had nothing else, whatever the future might bring to me. It was very strange that I had not heard from my father for so long a time; and this fact seemed to detach me more than ever from whatever possessions and prospects I might have on the other side of the ocean.

I rushed to the spot, and found that the barrels had been hastily tumbled out of the way; the brick pavement had been taken up, and a hole dug in the spot where the treasure had been hidden. It was evident that the robbers, whoever they were, had not known the precise locality of the package; for a hole much larger than the one we had made when we concealed it had been dug. The person or persons engaged in the robbery had removed the earth till they found the treasure. They had found it, and it was gone.

I felt like "a poor boy" again. All that I had on earth had been taken from me; for I did not count much on what was in England, especially after I learned that other heirs were fighting for it. I now looked about me in the cellar to see if I could find any thing that would throw any light upon the identity of the robbers. I discovered

the oil-cloth in which the treasure had been enveloped. It was covered with the soft mud of the cellar, and had evidently been removed because it was in such a dirty condition. I could find nothing else to connect the disappearance of the treasure with any human being.

As I said before, I felt like a poor boy again. Indeed, the finding of my father, and the fortune which had fallen to me, were like a dream of the past; and the startling discovery I had just made seemed to render it more unsubstantial than ever before. I came to the conclusion, before I left the cellar, that I was really a poor boy, though I had the steamer, which was nothing but an elephant on my hands without the means to pay her running expenses. For a short time I was almost distracted; but I gathered up my emotions, and determined to "keep cool" about the catastrophe.

I wanted to see Mr. Brickland, and I hastened out of the cellar. I did not expect him or any of the family to return to the house, as they would be likely to remain on the wharf till the steamer had started. In the yard I saw Dick Blister, whom I had sent to the post-office as soon as I came up to the wharf. He had gone with the horse and

wagon; and for the last ten or fifteen minutes he must have been at the stable, taking care of the team.

"How long have you been here, Dick?" I asked, as I met him in the yard.

"I came back from the post-office about fifteen minutes ago. Here is something for you, Alick," he replied, handing me the letter, which was not directed in the handwriting of my father, from whom I had not heard a word for over four months.

But I was too much excited at that moment, even to read a letter from my father. I put it into my pocket with the feeling that whatever was done to recover the valuable package must be done at once.

"Where have you been since you came back?" I inquired.

"About the yard here," replied Dick, with a grin. "When I took the horse out of the wagon, he got away from me; and I don't think that I should have caught him to-day if it hadn't been for Lynch Braceback."

"Then you did catch him?"

"Of course I did. Lynch was sitting on the fence near the end of the house. He headed him

off so that I caught him without much trouble. When that horse gets loose, it takes about ten men to catch him, for I have tried it on before."

"What was Lynch doing here?" I asked, approaching the subject very carefully.

"He said he was waiting for his father."

"Did you see his father when he came?"

"No: I was in the stable, I suppose; at any rate, when I came out, I saw Lynch and his father walking down the road to the wharf."

"Did you mind which way his father came from?"

"No, I did not. I didn't see him at all till I came out of the stable; and then he was some ways below the house."

"Have you seen anybody else about the house to-day, Dick?" I asked, feeling that I had got no clew so far.

"Not a soul."

"Did you meet any one when you came down from the village?"

"Not a soul. What is the matter? What do you ask these questions for, Alick?" asked Dick, who saw that something was the matter, hard as I tried to conceal what was in my thoughts.

"Never mind now. I want to know if anybody has been about here the last hour."

"I haven't seen anybody but Captain Braceback and his son; and I don't believe anybody else has been near the house to-day. I wasn't gone more than twenty minutes from the house; and if anybody had been here I should have met them on the way back," replied Dick very seriously; and he could not help seeing that I was very much troubled.

I told Dick to run down to the wharf, and ask Mr. Brickland to come up to the house as quick as possible. While he was gone I went into the cellar again. As I looked at the hole in the soft mud, I thought all this work could not have been done without some sort of tools. The earth was a sort of yellow clay which was not seen near the surface of the ground; and, when it touched any thing, it usually left its marks. I was sure I could tell the shovel that had been used, by the color of this clay upon it.

I looked about the cellar; but there was no implement of any kind to be found there. It was a warm spring day, and the windows of the cellar had been opened to air the place; for Mrs. Brick

land was very particular to keep it "sweet," as she called it.

I went out doors again, and found a shovel and a hoe, which had evidently been thrown out at one of these windows; not only the blades, but the handles of these implements, were daubed with the yellow clay. Those who had dug up the treasure had plainly used their hands as well as the tools I had found, which I recognized as those belonging to the stable.

By the time I had examined the shovel and the hoe, Mr. Brickland joined me. The urgency of the message I had sent him caused him to hasten to the house with all the speed he could make. In as few words as possible, I told him what had happened, and led the way to the cellar, that he might verify my statement by looking into the hole the robbers had dug.

My good guardian and friend was utterly bewildered by the announcement. He gazed into the hole in the cellar-bottom like one who had lost his wits. He said hardly a word; and what he did say did not amount to any thing. Possibly he understood the situation as I had figured it out, and concluded that the robbery made a poor boy of me again.

By this time I had fully recovered my self-possession; and possibly the bewilderment of my guardian helped me to regain the use of my faculties. I told him that in my opinion the robbery had been committed within the last half-hour; for Dick would have seen the men who did the job before that time, as he was at work in the stable-yard, in plain sight of the end of the house, where the robbers doubtless entered the cellar, for I found that the outer door was unfastened.

"Who did it?" demanded Mr. Brickland, when he had in some measure recovered from his bewilderment.

"That's the question," I replied.

"The folks haven't been down to the wharf more than an hour, and we left Dick here to see to things."

"I sent him to the post-office; and the work was done while he was gone," I continued.

"Well, what's to be done? Shall I go up and tell the sheriff about it, and have him go to work on the case?" asked Mr. Brickland.

"I hardly know what to do. The robbers could not have got back to the village without Dick's seeing them when he came back from the

post-office. I am inclined to believe they have moved down the river towards the lake, and that they will go to Detroit in a boat. Whoever did the job must be pretty well plastered with that yellow mud from the bottom of the cellar," I continued, musing upon the situation rather than expressing my deliberate convictions. "But Dick said that Lynch Braceback was here when he came back from the post-office, and helped him catch the horse when he got away from him. I must see Lynch at once, for he will know something about the matter."

I wondered that I had not thought of it before; but, as I was sure to see Lynch when I went on board of the Sylvania, I suppose I was looking out for persons who might not be so easily found when wanted. I led the way at a rapid rate towards the wharf, — so rapid that my guardian could not keep up with me. As I passed around the corner of the house, I saw the Islander backing out from the wharf. I got into the road to the wharf, and broke into a run; but before I could reach the wharf I saw the steamer under full steam, going down the river. I could not stop her, even were it desirable to do so.

When I came to the wharf, the Islander was out of hailing distance; but, as I had no business with her, I did not trouble myself with this matter. Lynch Braceback stood on the wharf, watching the receding steamer which contained his father. I walked up to him before he saw me.

"Where is the Islander going, Braceback?" I asked.

Lynch turned short round, and looked at me, instead of answering my question.

"I didn't know you were here, Captain Alick," said he, stammering out the words as though he had been frightened at my sudden appearance. "You startled me so that I have lost a year's growth."

"I didn't know you were so easily frightened, Mr. Braceback," I replied, rather astonished at his manner.

"Of course I am not frightened: I was only startled. It always made me jump when any one spoke to me suddenly."

"I asked you where the Islander was going," I repeated.

"I beg your pardon, captain: so you did; and

I was so startled that I did not answer you," replied Lynch, turning towards me.

For the first time I noticed that his hands and his clothes were daubed with yellow mud!

CHAPTER XIV.

PREPARING FOR THE CHASE.

I COULD not possibly mistake the color of the yellow mud I saw upon the garments of Lynch Braceback. Mr. Brickland's house was built on a slight elevation of land; and the yellow clay appeared at about four feet below the surface. I knew of no other place in the vicinity where the stratum was to be found. I had seen it only when the cellar and the well were dug until we dug into the bottom of the cellar to conceal the treasure.

The fact that Dick Blister had seen Lynch seated on the fence when he returned from the post-office came to my mind in this connection; and I was at once forced to the conclusion that Lynch had assisted in digging up the valuable package. He and his father had been loaded with bundles when I met them as I went up to the house. I had no doubt that the treasure was in the possession of one of them.

I wonder now that I did not at once charge Lynch with the robbery; but I did not. In fact, I was so astounded when I discovered the mud on his clothes, that I turned away from him. His embarrassed manner when I met him, and his sudden start when I spoke to him on the wharf, seemed to be a part of the evidence against him. Then it occurred to me that I had seen Lynch as I came out of the cellar after my guardian and I had buried the treasure. The conclusion was irresistible, that he had discovered what we were doing in the cellar on that occasion. As I did not care to talk any more with the mate of the Sylvania until I had made up my mind what course to pursue, I told Lynch that I would return in a short time, and walked towards the house again.

Lynch had been with his father when I met him; and it seemed to follow as a natural consequence, that Captain Braceback was concerned in the robbery. As I thought of the matter, I was even willing to believe that he was the prime mover in the affair. I knew that he hated me with all the venom of his malignant nature. In spite of my intimacy with his son, he had never "let up" in the slightest degree, and had not

bestowed a single pleasant word upon me during his residence in Montomercy.

"Have you got at any thing, Alick?" asked Mr. Brickland, as I met him on his way to the wharf, even more excited than when I had left him.

"I think I have found out all about it," I replied, seating myself in an arbor near the path where we met.

"You don't say so! what have you found out?" demanded my guardian, with breathless interest.

I told him what I had discovered, and stated my conclusions in full. He agreed with me that there was no place in the vicinity where the yellow clay was to be found; and he made no objection to the argument by which I fastened the guilt upon Lynch and his father. He stood with his mouth and his eyes wide open till I had finished my process of reasoning, and repeated my conclusions.

"It looks as though you had hit it about right, Alick," said Mr. Brickland, when I had concluded my argument. "I didn't think Captain Braceback was that sort of a man. You have always said that he hated you like poison."

"But I don't believe he stole the package be-

cause he hated me, or at least not for that reason alone, but because he wanted the money. He is a poor man now," I continued.

"But he has a job now to sail this steam-yacht for the season," added Mr. Brickland.

"And the first use he makes of her is in running off with the package."

"As I look back, it all seems plain enough now. He found out about this package before he was the watchman at the bank. I am inclined to think he wanted this place so as to help him in getting hold of it. But how could he know that it was buried in the cellar?"

"I begin to see a great many things that I did not understand before," I replied, recalling the events of the past. "It is plain enough to me that Lynch Braceback has been watching me, or was doing so at the time we concealed the package. I remember now, that, when I came from the cellar after we had finished the job, I met Lynch. He came out from behind that bush;" and I pointed to the one from whose shade I had seen him come out on the evening we hid the package.

"Why didn't you tell me this?" asked Mr.

Brickland. "If I had known it, I should have dug up the bundle, and put it in some other place. It is plain enough now that Lynch and his father have been working up this matter for months."

"Lynch has been one of my most intimate friends for months; and I had no reason to suppose he was spying out what I was doing," I pleaded. "But he told me he had just come from home. He said he was going to the front door to ring the bell when he saw me."

"I have no doubt that steamer came up here on purpose to carry off that package!" exclaimed my guardian, as he glanced down the river as if to get a sight of the Islander. "But it is time something was done."

"I think so myself; but it is better to go to work right, if we are an hour or two behind the other boat," I added.

"Don't you think we had better have Lynch arrested at once?" asked Mr. Brickland nervously.

"No, I don't: I think we had better not say a word about the matter to any one. I will follow the Islander if she goes to the end of the world,' I replied, rising from my seat. "I have no doubt that package is on board of her. But, whatever

we may believe, we have no evidence of any thing. The only thing to do now is to follow the Islander; and that I shall do. If I don't recover that package, I have no business in a steam-yacht; for I shall be a poor boy, as I was when I first came to Montomercy."

"You can never be as poor as you were then while I have any thing, Alick," added my guardian with earnestness. "Shall I go with you in the steamer?"

"No, sir: I think you had better stay here. As the matter stands now, Lynch don't know I suspect that he had any thing to do with the robbery, even if he knows that we have discovered the loss; and I think I can find out more by watching him than I can in any other way. I have not much doubt that Captain Braceback intends to take those stocks and bonds into Canada, and get rid of them as soon as possible. I shall follow him; and that is all I can do at present."

"But you need an officer to go with you," suggested Mr. Brickland.

"Not at all. I have no doubt Captain Braceback would throw the package into the lake, or

burn it in the furnaces of the Islander, rather than have his villany discovered. Revenge is his first object, and profit his second; and, if he can't have both, he will satisfy himself with one."

"I wish your father was here," mused my guardian.

"So do I; but, as he is not here, we must do the best we can without him. But it is time for me to be off. We have yet to prove whether the Islander or the Sylvania is the faster vessel."

"Don't blow her up, or any thing of that sort," added Mr. Brickland.

"Moses is a safe engineer; and I don't believe he will allow any harm to come to the Sylvania," I replied, as I hurried into the house for my clothes.

I was disposed to be excited; but I used my best efforts to keep cool. I could hardly think of treating Lynch Braceback like a friend after the event of the morning, though I could not do otherwise and carry out the plan I had formed. I hastened down to the wharf, followed by my guardian. The Islander was out of sight beyond the bends of the river, and was probably out in the lake by this time. When I reached the river I

found Lynch still on the wharf, walking up and down as though he were engaged in meditation. I thought he had enough to think about.

"We are all ready for a start, Lynch," I said as pleasantly as I could; but it required an effort for me to do so.

He followed me on board, after I had shaken hands with Mr. Brickland and bidden an affectionate adieu to the other members of the family.

"All hands on deck!" shouted the new mate.

All hands consisted of Ellie Dykeman, Bob Washburn, and Ben Bowman; and they appeared promptly at the call. A colored man whom we all called "Gopher" was the cook and steward; but he was busy at the galley, and was not expected to answer the summons, unless in case of an emergency. Professor Buckminster was in his state-room, attending to the duties of his position in reading some written exercises handed to him in the morning.

I went into the pilot-house, and took my station at the wheel. I gave the mate the order to cast off the fast forward, and then I backed her against the stern-line to throw her head off from the wharf.

"Haul in your stern-line!" I continued, when I had her bow pointed out from the wharf.

Mr. Brickland cast off the line, and the deck hands hauled it in. As the river was not wide enough for me to come about with the helm alone, I backed and went ahead until I had her pointed in the right direction.

"Give her all the steam you can!" I called to Moses Brickland, in the engine-room, through the speaking-tube.

"All right," replied Moses, and I thought he must be a little surprised at this order, as we were apparently bound on a pleasure-trip, with no occasion to hurry.

I did not see how it would be possible for me to manage the business on my hands without telling my friends on board the nature of the mission of the Sylvania. We had agreed to stop at certain places; and it would be necessary for me to explain why the programme was not carried out. I had no idea where the Islander would lead me; and the course could only be determined after we reached the lake, and saw the chase. We had intended to go to the upper lakes, into Lake Superior, following the northern shore to Duluth and

returning by the south shore. After this, if we did not spend too much time in hunting and fishing on the north shore, which was said to be the paradise of sportsmen, the plan was to visit Chicago, making the entire circuit of the Lake Michigan. We had two months before us, which appeared to be time enough to do all we had planned.

In half an hour we reached the mouth of Glinten River, and I looked in every direction for the Islander; but I could see nothing of her. I confidently anticipated that I should see her standing over to the flats, or headed south for Detroit River. In fact, there was no other course for her to take, unless she went in among the shoals, and crawled into some creek. But we were not yet out of the river, though I could have seen the Islander if she had gone in either of the expected directions. She might be concealed from my view by the headlands on either side of the river; and I expected to discover her as soon as the Sylvania was fairly out in the lake.

In a few minutes more we were clear of the river; but the Islander was not to be seen in any direction.

CHAPTER XV.

BEYOND POINT HURON.

"WHERE is your father going in the Islander, Lynch?" I asked, when we were out in the lake, and he appeared to be looking in every direction, as I was.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Lynch; and his face was as blank as though he was as much bewildered as the rest of us.

"Didn't he tell you where he was bound?"

"He didn't say a word to me about it; but I supposed he was going down to Lake Erie. It didn't occur to me that he was going anywhere else; and I asked no questions. He is out to try the steam-yacht; and I dare say it don't make any difference where he goes."

I could not determine in my own mind whether Lynch was lying or not. I had no doubt that the treasure was on board of the Islander. The fact of her sudden disappearance confirmed my

theory, adopted before I left the house of my guardian. Captain Braceback had a strong motive for getting out of my way. Thus far he could not know, or even have any good reason to suspect, that I had discovered the loss of the hidden package. Doubtless he had counted on the hurry and confusion of my departure on the extended excursion to obtain the treasure; and he could hardly have expected me to make an examination of the cellar at such an exciting time.

One mile north of the river was a point of land, and two miles south was another, behind either of which the Islander might be concealed. She had had time enough to conceal herself beyond either of them. The water was shallow in both directions; but Captain Braceback was a skilful pilot, and knew all the intricate channels of the lake. I was satisfied that the steamer was behind one or the other of these points, and the question was to determine which one. The navigation was rather better to the southward than in the opposite direction. I concluded that Captain Braceback intended to go through Detroit River as soon as he had shaken off the

Sylvania; and was therefore more likely to have hidden himself around the south than the north point.

Though I was well posted in regard to the navigation of these waters, I was not willing to take the risk of running as near the shore as the Islander must have gone. To get aground in the lake, where there are no tides, was to lose the battle in the beginning. About a mile out from the mouth of the river, I threw over the wheel, and headed her a little east of south for Point Huron buoy.

"Where are we bound, Captain Alick?" asked Lynch, who was standing on the forecastle, still looking in various directions by turns for the Islander.

"To the south south-east just now," I replied, with as much indifference as I could assume.

"But what are you going to do down here?" demanded the mate, evidently a little excited by the course of the Sylvania.

"I want to make an observation before we head her for the St. Clair River."

"Where are we going now?" asked Ellie, as he and Bob Washburn came into the pilot-house.

"I want to take a look behind that point," I replied, indicating the direction by a nod of the head.

"What's up?" inquired Bob, who could not help seeing that I was acting with a motive.

"Never mind: don't ask any thing more about it now, and I will tell you what I mean at some other time. Don't say a word to Lynch about it," I added in a low tone, so that the mate could not hear what I said.

"All right," answered Ellie, as he led the way out of the pilot-house.

"What are we doing down here?" asked Lynch of them, in a rather petulant tone, as they appeared on the forecastle.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Ellie. "You must ask Captain Alick: I suppose he knows what he is about."

Lynch glanced at me, and said no more; but I could see that he was vexed at the course of the vessel. I made up my mind that he knew the Islander was concealed behind Point Huron, though it was very easy to be mistaken. He and his father had expected me to stand over to the St. Clair River; and, as soon as I was fairly out of

sight, he intended to run down to Windsor, opposite Detroit, and from that point proceed to some large city in Canada or the United States to dispose of the bonds and other securities, most of which had a cash value in the market. He could certainly realize a hundred thousand dollars from the treasure. It was not at all likely that he intended to return and command the Islander during the summer season. It was more probable that he would proceed to Montreal, and take a steamer of the Allen line for England.

I rather congratulated myself that I had "smoked out" his plan, and that I should defeat its execution. Captain Braceback might succeed in landing at Windsor, or some other port on the British side; but if he did I would follow him, even if he went across the Atlantic. I believed just then that I was a very shrewd young man; and boys of my age are apt to be a little conceited.

I watched every look and every movement of the mate of the Sylvania; but I had no fear of any thing he might do as long as he remained on deck. Yet it was perfectly evident to me that he was on board of this steamer for a purpose.

While I acted for my own interest, he was in the service of his father, whose object it was to prevent me from pursuing, or at least from overtaking, the Islander. I had no doubt Lynch would run the steamer aground, derange her machinery, or do any thing else that would disable her. It was necessary to watch him all the time; for as mate he had the power to ruin all my hopes. While I was thinking about the situation, Lynch walked aft. I called Ellie to the wheel, and followed the mate.

I found Lynch on the quarter-deck. He was evidently very nervous about the situation; and my following him did not quiet his agitation. He wanted to do something; and it was possible that he had gone aft to derange the steering apparatus, or for some similar purpose. Whatever his object, my appearance prevented him from carrying it out.

"It seems to me, Captain Alick, that you are taking a very strange course in order to reach the upper lakes," said Lynch, after he had fidgeted about the deck for some time.

"We are in no hurry: we have two months before us," I replied rather carelessly. "We may go through the cut channel."

"But you are headed for the south-west corner of the lake; and you are altogether out of the way for the channel," added Lynch nervously, as he gazed earnestly in the direction of Point Huron.

"I know; but it will not take long to run over to the channel if we conclude to go up that way."

I had nothing particular to say, and no explanations to make. I wanted an opportunity to talk over the situation with Ellie and Bob; and by this time I had come to the conclusion that it would be necessary for me to take into my confidence all on board except Lynch Braceback, and possibly Ben Bowman and the cook. I was sure I could trust them, and that every one of them would be devoted to my interest. Until I had informed my friends of the situation, I should be obliged to watch the mate myself; and at this moment I had to follow him wherever he went to prevent him from doing any mischief.

In a short time the Sylvania was abreast of Point Huron, and I wanted to be forward where I could better examine the shore beyond it; but I could not take my eye off the mate, for he might

go below when my eye was removed from him, and disable the steamer in five minutes' time. On the other hand, I could not explain the situation to my friends in his presence, for I did not wish him to know that I suspected the nature of the mission of the Islander to Glinten River. I expected that the words and actions of Lynch would reveal something more of the plans and intentions of his father.

"What are you going to do in here, any way?" asked the mate, after he had fidgeted a while longer, and I had amused myself as best I could without exciting his suspicion.

"I am only going to take a look in beyond the point," I answered. "I don't know that it makes any particular difference where we go: do you think it does?"

"Of course it don't; but, when the fellows understand that they are going to the upper lakes, they want to be on the way there. We are in a hurry to see Lake Superior; and we don't want to be fooling around here where every thing is as familiar to us as it is up Glinten River. I don't see how we can help being impatient to see the parts of the lakes we have never visited."

"Are the rest of the fellows impatient to be off?" I asked.

"I haven't heard them say any thing; but I have no doubt they have the same feeling I have."

"We will go forward, and see about it. If they are in a hurry, we will see what we can do to hasten the matter."

Lynch followed me, for the reason that he could not well avoid doing so. We went to the pilot-house.

"Ellie, Lynch thinks the fellows are impatient to be on the way to the upper lakes," I began, laughing rather to conceal my anxiety than because there was any thing funny about the question. "How do you feel about it?"

"Oh! I am perfectly satisfied to do any thing the captain of the Sylvania thinks best," replied the wheelman.

"Of course he is in no hurry, as long as he has the wheel. He has something to do and to think about."

"That's the idea, is it?" I exclaimed. "Then we can put you out of misery in a very short space of period," I added, laughing; and the

thought that came into my mind amused me so that I wondered it had not come to me before.

"I'm not in misery," answered Lynch, with a rather sickly smile, as he glanced at the shore inside of the point. "There isn't a fellow on board of the steamer that don't like to be at the wheel."

"I dare say there isn't one of you that will not get enough of it before the cruise is finished," I added. "You may take the wheel now, Lynch."

"Of course I don't want to take the wheel away from Ellie Dykeman," protested Lynch; and I saw that his jaw fell tremendously on the instant.

"I am perfectly willing to give it up, though I confess that I like the job better than any thing else on board," said Ellie.

"You hear that, Captain Alick!" exclaimed Lynch.

"I hear it; but you will take the wheel, Lynch," I replied.

"But I protest against depriving Ellie of his fun," continued Lynch.

"We can't have any protesting on board ship: it is never in order. If I am captain, all hands

must obey me. — Go forward, Ellie," I added, taking the wheel from his hands.

Ellie obeyed the order without any hesitation; and Lynch, sorely against his will, took the helm from my hands.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ACCIDENT TO THE WHEEL.

LYNCH had not intended to disobey my orders, and I did not regard his objection to taking the helm as mutiny. If I had not understood his intentions, I should have considered his conduct a fit subject for discipline. By this time I had fully made up my mind that the Islander was concealed somewhere beyond Point Huron. Lynch wanted his time to himself, so that he could slip below and disable the Islander, thus enabling his father to escape without any pursuit.

"Keep her south-west!" I called to Lynch, as I left the pilot-house.

But I saw that it would be necessary for me to watch him very closely, for there was so much shallow water near that he could have put her hard and fast aground in five minutes. I walked a little way aft to a point abreast of my state-

room, so that I could see where the steamer went, though the mate could not see me. It was possible for Lynch to derange the steering-gear, but he could not interfere with the engine. If he attempted to run the vessel ashore, I had a bell-pull near me, and I could stop and back the engine before the traitor in the pilot-house could run her aground.

I got the range of an object on the shore miles ahead, and any considerable deviation from the course would be apparent to me. In this position I beckoned Ellie to join me. He had one eye on me all the time, for I dare say my movements were somewhat strange to him. I intended to give him only a hint in regard to the conduct of the mate, reserving the full explanation for a more convenient season. Ellie came aft at once, leaving Bob Washburn on the forecastle, for he had not observed my signal to his companion.

"Ellie, there is trouble on board," I began in an impressive whisper, which caused him to open wide his expressive eyes.

He looked at me, apparently confounded by the announcement: as we were just starting on a pleasure-excursion, and had always been the best

of friends, nothing could have been more unexpected to him. He asked no question, but waited for further explanation.

"Lynch Braceback is playing a big game on me, Ellie," I continued in the same impressive whisper.

"What do you mean by that, Captain Alick?" demanded my companion.

"I can't stop to explain it now, but he is a traitor to me. Don't say a word to him, or let him know by your looks or actions that we suspect any thing. I know what I am about; and I want you to watch him all the time, without letting him know that you suspect any thing."

"But I can't see" —

"Never mind: I can see it all. Now go forward, and as soon as" —

I had said so much when there was a sudden snap, the noise of a rattling chain was heard, and it was evident from the feeling of the vessel that something had given way. Of course I at once attributed the mishap, whatever it was, to the trickery of the mate at the wheel. But in an instant I realized what had happened. A similar accident, if this was an accident, had occurred on

board before. The wheel-rope was broken or detached from its fastening on the drum; and one of the tiller-chains had run out, making a great noise as it rushed through the grooves and over the pulleys which kept it in place.

I sprang to the bell-pull, and one stroke of the gong in the engineer's room stopped the engine. I rang to back her, and then to stop her as soon as the steamer had lost her headway. She lay in the channel, with twelve feet of water all around her; and for the present she was perfectly safe. It was plain enough to me that Lynch had intended to let the Sylvania run aground, for he ought to have pulled the bell the instant the rope parted. In half a minute more she would have been hard and fast; for, running on at full speed, she must have buried her keel in the sand at the bottom of the lake.

"That's what's the matter!" I exclaimed, as soon as the steamer was stationary on the water. "Lynch did that on purpose."

"Do you think so?" demanded Ellie, with a look of blank amazement.

"I know it!" I replied in an energetic whisper. "Remember what I told you, and keep your eyes wide open."

I rushed into the pilot-house to ascertain the nature of the mischief that had been done. I was satisfied, that, if I had not been on the lookout for something of the kind, the Sylvania would have been at this moment aground; and it might have taken several days to get her off. It could only have been done by taking out all her coal; and, while we were engaged in this task, Captain Braceback could have gone to any part of the lake he wished without pursuit, though of course I should have had an officer sent after him as soon as I could return to Montomercy.

"What's the matter, Lynch?" I asked as coolly as I could; and the accident was enough to explain any little excitement on my part.

"The wheel-rope has parted!" exclaimed the mate; and he manifested far more excitement than I did. "I saw that the lashing was loose, and I was just going to call you when the rope gave way."

"Why didn't you stop her?" I inquired.

"I had my hand on the bell-pull to do so when I heard the gong; and I saw that you had done it for me. Of course if I had rung again Moses would have started her," said Lynch, much ex-

cited; or at least he pretended to be so. "Didn't you see that the lashing of the wheel-rope was loose, Captain Alick?"

"I hadn't observed it," I replied.

"It is strange that you did not: you are so careful about these things," added Lynch.

"It is strange. But it is lucky it broke here where there was no strain on the rudder, and not when we were running in a swift current, which might have carried us ashore. Never mind it: we can soon repair damages," I continued.

I saw Lynch gazing anxiously at the shore inside of Point Huron; and I was confident the Islander was concealed somewhere beyond it, though I could not think of any creek that would afford her a hiding-place. But there was no time to lose, and I did not lose any. I called all hands, and, putting the helm amidships, had the chain attached to the broken wheel-rope hauled forward. Giving the rope the required number of turns on the drum, I rigged a whip, and hauled the line taut, so that we could secure the end around one of the spokes, as it had been before. I removed the piece of spun-yarn with which it had been fastened, and sent Ben Bowman for a

new one. While he was gone I examined the spun-yarn which had parted, though I turned my back to the mate as I did so. It was a mystery to me that the seizing should give way, but my examination assured me that the rope-yarn had been cut with a knife. As Ben returned to the pilot-house, I put the seizing in my pocket for further examination, and possibly for use as evidence.

I secured the end of the wheel-rope again with the greatest care, so that there should be no excuse for another accident of this kind. I said nothing more to the mate about the matter, nothing more to any one. I overhauled the seizing on the other wheel-rope, and found it perfectly sound, as I was confident the other had been.

"We are all right now, Lynch; and you can go ahead again," I said, when the damage had been repaired.

Backing the Sylvania had brought her to her original position when the wheel-rope gave way, and she was headed down the channel. The mate rang the bell, and the steamer went ahead again. I did not think the traitor would attempt to disable the steering-gear again; and I left the pilot-

house, as Ellie and Bob had done before. I went forward, and seated myself at the heel of the bowsprit, where I could obtain a good view of the shore inside of Point Huron. I could see nothing of the Islander, though by this time we were in a position to discover her if she were in this part of the lake.

Ellie was following my instructions to the letter, for he neither said nor looked any thing. The Sylvania continued on her course to the south-west till she was full five miles from the mouth of Glinten River. I took my spyglass, and carefully examined the shore from the point to the head of the bay; but I could see nothing that looked like a steamer. I was mystified and perplexed; for I had been so confident the Islander had come in this direction, that I was not willing to believe to the contrary.

"How much farther are we going in this direction?" called Lynch from the pilot-house.

"I'll see in a few minutes," I replied.

I had kept one eye on the mate all the time, and he had been examining the shore as carefully as I had done; and more than once he had used the field-glass which usually lay on the shelf in

front of him, by the side of the binnacle. If I was mistaken, as I began to think I was by this time, he had been no less mistaken, in regard to the direction taken by the Islander. My companions not on duty had been strolling about the deck, and continued their walk to the stern of the vessel.

"I see the Islander is making for the north channel," said Bob Washburn, as he came forward after one of these strolls aft.

He spoke as though it did not make the slightest difference where the Islander went, f[illegible]ther he nor Ellie knew that I was looking f[illegible] I did not care to call the mate's attenti[illegible] fact that the other steamer had been [illegible] and I walked leisurely aft with the gl[illegible] hand. When I reached the quarter-d[illegible] amined the distant craft, and realized t[illegible] indeed the Islander.

She was all of seven miles distant f[illegible] was plain enough that she had run [illegible] the north point, instead of going to the [illegible] as I had believed she would do. As [illegible] Sylvania was well out of her way, she [illegible] out from her hiding-place, and stood

north-east. But I had discovered her, and that was all I wanted. I was satisfied that I could overtake her some time; or at least get upon the track of her captain if he landed on the British side of the lake.

"I think we won't go any farther in this direction, Lynch," I said, in an indifferent tone, as I walked forward. "Come about, and stand over to the south-pass channel."

"All right, Captain Alick," replied the mate.

I was confident that he had not yet seen the Islander; but he knew enough about the lake to be satisfied that his father's vessel was not where we had both supposed she was. He put the helm down, and the Sylvania was soon standing over towards the channel in an east south-easterly direction. Seven miles to the northward and eastward was the Islander, barely to be observed at this distance. I watched the face of Lynch, and I saw the slight start he gave when he discovered her.

We had a run of six miles to the entrance of the channel; and I concluded that it was time for me to enlighten my friends in regard to the situation.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SYLVANIA IN THE SHADE.

IT was plain sailing across the lake, and I had decided to unburden my mind to Ellie and Bob in the cabin. But all the while I was thinking where I was coming out in the chase that was before me: the Islander was headed for the north channel, and the Sylvania for the south channel. I went into my state-room to examine my chart before I opened the conference with my friends.

As nearly as I could measure the distance with the dividers, each of the two steamers would have to go fifteen miles before they would come together on the St. Clair River. The Islander was certainly headed towards the north pass, and the presumption was that she was going through it to the river. But at this point a harassing doubt came up for consideration. After the Sylvania had entered the south pass, and those on board of her could no longer look out on the lake, the

Islander might come about, and make for Detroit River and Lake Erie. If I lost sight of her I should be obliged to chase her in the dark.

I could have no doubt in regard to the intentions of Captain Braceback. He had gone to the northward, and concealed his craft behind the point, in order to throw me off the track. Doubtless he supposed I should run for St. Clair River, and intended, as soon as the Sylvania had disappeared in the south pass, to make for Detroit River. Behind the point he could not see what had become of her; and I had no doubt he believed she had gone into the canal, and thence into the south pass, in accordance with his programme.

I could see the Islander; but he could also see the Sylvania as she came out from behind Huron Point. Possibly by this time he suspected that I had missed the treasure. If he did, the fact would make him all the sharper, and all the more anxious to keep out of my way. Of course, if I had fathomed his purpose sooner, I should not have come out from the friendly shelter of the land till the Islander was through the crooked channel and fairly in the pass. But it was too

late now to recede from my position, and I could only make the best of it.

After carefully examining the chart, I made up my mind what to do. I could not afford to let Captain Braceback get to the southward of me; for a run of twenty miles would bring him to Windsor, where there were several trains every day to the large towns of the Dominion. I decided, therefore, to run into the south pass a short distance, and take a position where I could see the Islander if she returned to the south. I knew of several places where the Sylvania could be concealed.

By the time I had made these calculations, we were at the entrance of the old channel, used before the opening of the canal through the flats. A large schooner in tow of a tug-boat had just come through, bound to the southward. The engine of the tug appeared to be out of order, and she had stopped her propeller to repair damages. The two vessels were at rest near the entrance of the channel. The schooner was a three-master; and, though the wind was light, she had all her sails set. The sight of her suggested a new idea. I went into the pilot-house, and relieved the mate from duty at the wheel.

Taking the helm of the Sylvania, I ran her to windward of the schooner, so that she was between the steam-yacht and the Islander. The men on board of the tug hailed us as we approached; and this afforded me a sufficient excuse for running alongside of the schooner. The engineer of the tug asked if we had a certain kind of bolt on board. I called Moses; and, in order to delay matters as much as possible, I directed the mate to get out the boat, and, placing Ben Bowman in charge of the machine, I sent our engineer on board of the disabled steamer.

I was satisfied that those on board of the Islander could not see the Sylvania; and, at her distance from us, it would be easy for them to suppose she had entered the south pass. Moses went on board of the tug. I had quietly instructed him to render all the assistance in his power, assuring him that we were in no hurry. He was an enthusiast in the matter of machinery, and I had known him to work all night over a difficult problem in his favorite study. It appeared afterwards that he and the engineer of the tug had disagreed in regard to the disability of the engine, which had been built in the shop

where Moses learned his trade; and between them it took an hour to settle the question in dispute before they were ready to repair the damage.

As the mate was at a safe distance, I had the desired opportunity to explain the situation to Ellie and Bob Washburn. Before I had fairly introduced the explanation, Professor Buckminster came out of his state-room where he had been reading, and wanted to know when I intended to resume my studies. I told him I did not believe I could bring my mind up to Latin, Greek, and mathematics, for a few days, for I was greatly excited over another subject.

"You mustn't turn aside from your studies for any thing else if you intend to enter college in a year from this summer," said he, shaking his head.

"I don't know as I can enter college at all, to say nothing of a year hence," I replied; and I am afraid my smile was rather a sickly one as I thought of the consequences of the loss of the treasure.

"Why, what has happened?" asked the professor, with a look of anxiety; and I was sure it was born of a real interest in his pupil.

"I have not heard from my father for several months, and I should not be at all surprised to

learn that all my prospects on the other side of the Atlantic were blasted," I answered. "I should not mind that so much if I had not been robbed of all I had on this side of the ocean."

"Why, what do you mean, Alick?" demanded the professor.

"What has happened, Captain Alick?" asked Bob and Ellie in the same breath.

It took me half an hour to tell what had happened as briefly as I could. I related the history of the valuable package from the time it had been first deposited in the Montomercy Bank for safe-keeping, down to the moment when it had been taken from the cellar of Mr. Brickland's house.

"I did not think you and Mr. Brickland were such fools as to put a package containing over a hundred thousand dollars in the cellar of the house," said Ellie bluntly.

"We were not fools enough to leave it in the bank after two or three attempts to rob it had been made," I retorted rather sharply.

"But it is evident enough that Captain Bruce-back, as the watchman of the bank, made all these attempts himself," interposed Mr. Buckminster.

"It is very easy to see that now; but it was not

so easy when we took out the package, and we should certainly have taken it out if we had understood that he had designs upon it. But it is useless to discuss the past: the future is all we have to do with. I am confident that package is on board of the Islander. Captain Braceback will land at some port on the Canada side, where he can take a train to Montreal, Toronto, or some other large place; and our business just now is to prevent him from doing so, and to recover the property if possible," I continued.

"Well, why are you not following the Islander, instead of lying idle here?" asked the professor, with no little excitement in his manner.

"I think the Islander will come about, and run for Windsor as soon as Captain Braceback thinks we are well on our way through the south pass," I answered.

I explained the movements of the Islander, as I understood them, and the reason why I had placed the Sylvania in the shadow of the great sails of the three-master. As I spoke I took the glass, and examined the situation of the steamer at the north of us. It seemed to me that she had stopped her propeller; and, comparing her with the stationary

objects in the distance, I was satisfied this was the case. We had been alongside the schooner more than half an hour, and I was satisfied that her people had missed the Sylvania. They were doubtless engaged just then in looking her up, or waiting for her to get well up the south pass.

I explained my views of the situation to my friends, and they expressed the opinion that I was correct. At any rate, every thing worked in accordance with the theory I had laid down. The schooner had lowered her jib and flying-jib, and there was hardly wind enough to flap her other sails, which afforded the steamer a convenient shelter. I had directed Ben Bowman to bank his fires so that the smoke from the furnaces should not betray our position.

We continued to discuss the situation in the pilot-house, until we had used up an hour in this way. By this time the engineer of the tug had been convinced as to the difficulty with the engine of his craft; but it required another hour to repair the damage. Lynch had become disgusted with the delay, for Moses had not told him what instructions I had given him.

The mate sculled the boat back to the Sylvania

He could not help seeing the position of the Islander; and very likely he fathomed the purpose of his father, as I was satisfied I had done. She had ceased to move; and this fact disturbed Lynch. Probably he understood from it that his father intended to return to the southward as soon as the Sylvania was fairly out of sight in the south pass. He could no longer wait patiently for the engineer to complete his work, as he had done while he believed the Islander was increasing her distance from the Sylvania.

"How much longer are we to remain here?" he demanded, as his boat came within hailing distance of the steamer.

"We are in no hurry, Lynch, as I have been saying all the morning," I replied quietly.

"Moses will never get that job done," protested the mate.

"Do you think so? How far along have they got with it?"

"I don't know. We shall not get into the St. Clair River till night at this rate," continued Lynch impatiently.

"No matter if we don't: we know the way. But just return and ask Moses how much longer it will take to finish the job," I added.

Possibly Lynch believed this would expedite the matter, and he sculled the boat back to the tug.

"You can see that he understands the situation," I remarked, as the mate passed out of hearing distance. "He was not in a hurry till he saw that the Islander had stopped. Some of us must keep an eye on Lynch night or day," I continued earnestly. "If he goes below, some one must follow him."

"We will do that," replied Ellie and Bob together. "This is getting to be rather exciting."

"It will be when the chase actually begins. We are only skirmishing now," I added, as I raised my glass to examine the Islander again. "She has come about, and is headed to the south now!" I exclaimed, not a little excited to find that I had correctly read the intentions of the captain of the Islander.

In half an hour more she was off Glinten River. When Moses had finished the job on the tug's engine, Lynch and the engineer returned.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A RACE TO THE SOUTHWARD.

I SAW that Lynch Braceback was intensely excited when he came on board of the Sylvania. He could not help seeing that I was getting the better of his father in the bit of strategy I was using. I wondered if he believed I suspected the loss of the valuable package he and his father had stolen. I did not see how he could help doing so.

"Why are we waiting here all this time?" demanded Lynch, as he came upon deck.

"Why, what is the matter, Lynch? you seem to be excited," I replied, laughing at his agitation; and I felt pretty good over the present situation of affairs.

"I hate to stay here all day when there is such a pile of fun before us in the upper lakes," added the mate; and he hardly took the trouble to conceal his disgust. "But the confounded old tug is fixed up now, and we needn't wait any longer."

"Don't be in such a hurry, Lynch: we may not go up the St. Clair for a day or two yet. What makes you so impatient?"

"When a fellow gets his mind made up for any thing, he don't like to be kept back a week for nothing."

"But we have two months before us; and it isn't more than three days' run to Lake Superior at the most," I added. "Isn't that the Islander coming down the lake, Lynch?"

"I suppose it is," replied the mate, looking at me very sharply.

"Your father seems to have changed his mind, and concluded not to go up the lake any farther."

"I don't know that he intended to go up the lake any farther," growled Lynch.

At this moment Ben Bowman struck eight bells, for we did every thing in ship-shape style. Before the mate could say any thing more, the steward rang the bell at the door of the cabin for dinner.

"We may as well go in and have dinner before we get under way again," I said, calling Ben, and giving him the charge of the pilot-house and deck.

"I don't want any dinner yet," exclaimed Lynch, who saw that the Islander must be quite

near us by the time the meal was finished. "If the rest of you will go to dinner, I will start the steamer, and eat my dinner when you get through," suggested Lynch.

"No: let's have a good time at the table, for Gopher has got up a nice dinner for us," laughed Ellie, who saw where the shoe pinched the mate. "Besides, we want to give the Islander three cheers when she comes down."

I insisted that we should all dine together, and the mate reluctantly followed us down into the cabin.

We had beefsteak, fried potatoes, coffee, and a pudding, which we discussed at length, though we could all see that Lynch was fidgeting the whole time, unable to keep reasonably quiet in his seat. The Sylvania was still in the shade of the sails of the steamer; for in repairing the damage the engineer of the tug had been obliged to draw his fires because the heat interfered with the work. He was getting up steam again, and all hands on the three vessels were at dinner.

We enjoyed the dinner very much, not only because it was a good dinner, but because the mate was so much annoyed at the delay. Ellie

and Bob were full of fun; and even Moses, though he did not know any thing about the situation, was remarkably bright. We spent a full half-hour at the table. When Lynch tried to hurry us, Bob spoke very elaborately of the danger to the digestive organs of haste in eating. Ellie thought that about half of the fun of a cruise on the lakes or at sea was in the pleasures of the table.

But at last the meal was finished, and poor Lynch rushed up the ladder from the cabin as though he expected to find a gold-mine as soon as he reached the deck. The rest of us followed him more leisurely. When I reached the quarter-deck, I discovered the Islander just about abreast of us, not more than two miles distant. She was making for Detroit River with all her speed. If she had seen the Sylvania at all, it could only have been within the last five or ten minutes.

"We are rather too far off to give her three cheers," said Ellie, as we came together on deck.

"We will try to get nearer to her," I replied. "Moses, put on steam, all you can safely carry."

I hastened to the pilot-house, and, ringing the bell to go ahead, I took a hasty survey of the situation. The steamer began to move, but her steam

was rather low; and this fact was against us. But I knew that Moses would have her at her best speed in a very short time. I opened the binnacle, and headed the Sylvania south-west, half south. The distance to Detroit River was just twenty miles; and the Islander had the same distance to run, with some little advantage of us in the fact that she had a full head of steam on.

"Where are we going now?" demanded the mate, as soon as I had laid the course of the steamer.

"We are going down to give the Islander three cheers," I replied merrily.

"It seems to me you are going a long distance out of your way to do it," said Lynch with a sickly smile.

"She is not more than two miles from us now,' I answered, glancing at the chase.

"But you won't get any nearer to her for two hours at least. My father says the Islander can outsail any thing on the lakes."

"Perhaps he is right; but I should like to measure lengths with him for a while."

"Why don't you give the three cheers here, and let us go about our business?"

"We are out on a pleasure-excursion; and we may as well take our fun as we go along," I continued, laughing at the earnestness of the mate.

Lynch was not at all satisfied with the situation; but he evidently could not trust himself to converse with me on the subject. He could not help realizing that he was betraying himself; or at least that he was manifesting too much interest in the course of the Sylvania, as compared with his companions on board. He walked aft; but both Ellie and Bob followed him, as they had been instructed to do. I did not feel that the mate had any power to do any mischief under this close surveillance.

I soon found that Moses was carrying out his instructions to put on all the steam he could carry; for the speed of the Sylvania was rapidly increasing. The Islander had been gaining upon us, but within half an hour I was satisfied that we were holding our own. I watched the chase with the closest attention; and I used my geometry in measuring the angles between our relative position and the fixed objects on the shore. For the next half-hour neither vessel appeared to gain on the other. But we were approaching the same point from positions two miles apart; and, if each

steamer held its own, we should enter Detroit River at about the same time.

I had not told Moses Brickland any thing about the situation on board, as he had been on the tug when I made my explanations to the rest of my friends. I thought I had better give him the information I had conveyed to the others, and I called Bob Washburn into the pilot-house. He had often steered the Sylvania by compass, but he was not quite so good a wheelman as I wished he was. I gave him the helm; but I charged him to keep her very steady, and not let her vary even a fraction of a point from the course.

"Steer very small, and watch the compass every instant: don't mind any thing else," I said to him, as I left the pilot-house.

The great fault of inexperienced helmsmen is, that they keep the vessel "wabbling" about by turning the wheel too much when she varies a little from the course. I had often spoken to Bob about this matter; and he had greatly improved. I watched him for a few minutes, till I saw that he was doing just right, and then hastened to the engine-room, though not till I had stationed the mate on the forecastle as a lookout.

"Are you doing your best with her, Moses?" I asked.

"Perhaps not the best," replied the engineer as he glanced at his gauges. "I am not driving her, but she has what we call full steam."

"Can she do any better without danger?" I inquired with interest.

"I should say that she could; but I did not understand that you were in any particular hurry," said Moses.

"I am in the biggest hurry I ever was in in my life.

"Is that so?" and Moses looked inquiringly at me, as though he wondered why I could possibly be in a hurry on the present occasion.

But, without waiting to hear what I had to say in explanation of my haste, he went down into the fire-room, and added an extra supply of fuel to the furnaces. Calling Ben Bowman, he charged him to watch the fires, and returned to the engine-room.

In as few words as possible, I told him the story I had related to my other friends. He was much astonished, and wondered that his father had never said any thing to him about the package. I

stated the reason why Mr. Brickland had been silent. He was sure he could get another mile an hour out of the Sylvania without any danger; and he at once busied himself with the oil-cans. I had no doubt he would do all in his power to enable me to overhaul the Islander, and I left him.

Returning to the pilot-house, I watched the steering of the vessel, and assured Bob he was doing as well as anybody could do with the wheel. I measured the angles again; and, when the Sylvania began to shake and vibrate under the increased pressure of steam, I saw that we were gaining a little. The race was growing rather exciting to all who understood the situation.

"What are you trying to do, Captain Alick?" asked Lynch, striving to be as calm as possible.

"You say your father thinks the Islander can beat the Sylvania; and I want to know about it," I replied.

"But you are driving the Sylvania: she shakes like a log in a saw-mill," added Lynch. "I don't think my father is hurrying the Islander."

"I should say that he was. Can't you see by the smoke that they are piling in the coal?"

"My father has sailed both of these steamers, and he says the Islander can beat this one; and I think he ought to know," added Lynch; and he was evidently glad to have something besides the real situation to explain his nervous manner.

"I have heard it stated just the other way,—that the Sylvania, which was built after the Islander, was just a little faster," I added. "Be that as it may, we can settle this question now to the satisfaction of your father and all concerned."

"But my father is not driving the Islander."

"Well, if he chooses to let her be beaten, that will not be my fault. But there goes another lot of coal into the furnaces," I continued, as a volume of black smoke rolled up from her smoke-stack.

"You ought to have said something about it to my father before we started, if you wanted to race with him," said Lynch.

"I think he can see it now. We are beating him, as sure as you live!"

About five miles from the entrance of the river, the Islander suddenly came about.

CHAPTER XIX.

COALING AT PORT HURON.

WHEN the Islander came about, the Sylvania had perhaps gained a couple of lengths upon her. It was not a very decided victory: indeed, it was so insignificant that the mate refused to acknowledge that we had beaten her at all. Certainly he was not very loyal to the craft in which he sailed; but then the issue was a false one with him as well as with me. But I was pleased to know that the Islander could not run away from me.

"I suppose you will go through the canal now, and let us be on our way for the upper lakes," said Lynch, coming up to me at the heel of the bowsprit.

"I don't know about that yet. You seem to think the Sylvania has not beaten the Islander; and I should like to know something more about this business," I replied, laughing. "Come about,

Bob, and follow the Islander; but you need not follow her if our craft insists upon going ahead."

"I don't see what you want to keep fooling with her for!" exclaimed the mate, disgusted with the situation.

"I think I shall be obliged to follow the Islander till you are willing to admit that the Sylvania is too much for her."

"If that is all you want, I will admit it now," added Lynch.

"Oh no! I'm not going to accept your admission till you are satisfied on the point. I don't want you to go on shore and say that the Sylvania was beaten, or that your father was not driving his craft."

"I will give it up, and never say a word about the matter any way, if you will only let us go on about our business," replied the mate.

"You have got my blood up; and I want to know about it now, especially as the Islander is headed the very way we desire to go."

Lynch said no more, and I sent him to the wheel to relieve Bob. I told him to follow the Islander wherever she went; but I did not intend to trust him without keeping a sharp lookout over his actions.

If the mate did not realize that the Sylvania was beating the Islander, his father did; for we were coming into Detroit River ahead of her. It was plain enough to Captain Braceback that he could not land at Windsor, or at any other point on the Canada side, without finding me close by him when he did so. For this reason he had come about, doubtless concluding that he stood a better chance to get away from me by running for the upper lakes.

"Do you suppose Captain Braceback believes you have discovered the loss of the package?" asked Ellie, as we met near the door of the engine-room.

"I have no doubt he is afraid we have, though it is possible he thinks we are only trying to get up a race with him," I replied. "At any rate, he means to be on the safe side, and keep out of our way if he can."

"Are you sure that Lynch knows his father took the package?" asked Bob.

"Am I sure? He helped him dig it up at the bottom of the cellar," I replied confidently. "Didn't you see the yellow mud on his clothes?"

"I noticed it," said both of my friends together.

"It was that which assured me he had been concerned in the taking of it."

"I have been thinking of this matter since you told us about it," continued Ellie thoughtfully. "Don't you believe it was Lynch who got you into all those scrapes at Somerset College?"

"I don't know: I hadn't thought of the matter," I replied, turning my attention in that direction.

"I will bet my life that Lynch was at the bottom of the whole of it!" exclaimed Bob Washburn.

"Perhaps it was; but it isn't proved," I added.

"Perhaps it may never be proved; but a fellow can have his opinion, for all that," said Bob.

"It looks to me now just as if Captain Braceback was in Montomercy for the sole purpose of getting you into trouble, Captain Alick," added Ellie.

He went over the ground to show the reason for his belief. I had no doubt that Captain Braceback got into the bank as a watchman for the sole purpose of obtaining possession of the package deposited there by my guardian; but I could not see why Lynch should try to get me into trouble at the school, unless it was to make it appear that

I was a bad boy, and had taken the package myself. But it was of little use to prove that Lynch had been a traitor to me from the very beginning of our acquaintance: he was certainly playing a double part now, and that was enough for my present purpose.

I told Moses that he need not drive the Sylvania any more; that all I desired was to keep the Islander in sight. The pressure was removed, and the chase began to gain upon us. The engineer noticed the increasing distance between the two vessels, and spoke to me about it. I waited a while longer, and then saw that Captain Braceback was no more inclined to drive his boat than I was. The pressure was removed from the Islander, and for the next hour the two vessels maintained their distance from each other.

"The Islander has changed her course," said Ellie, who was the first to notice the fact.

"I see: she is going through the canal," I replied.

A moment later the mate changed the course of the Sylvania. By this time the chase was about half a mile ahead of us. When she entered the canal, she was obliged to slow down to

less than half speed; but, as we were compelled to do the same, we gained nothing; and both vessels entered the south pass at the same distance as before from each other. At eight o'clock in the evening we reached Port Huron. I was curious to know how large a supply of coal the Islander had; but I had made up my mind in the morning that her bunkers were full, for she was well down in the water. In this respect the conditions of the two vessels were about equal.

Captain Braceback must be satisfied by this time that he could not run away from the Sylvania; and I was confident that he relied upon a fog, or some other circumstance, to enable him to dodge us. But the weather was entirely clear, with no prospect of a storm, or even of thick fogs.

"She is going in at a wharf!" exclaimed Bob Washburn, rushing up to me on the quarter-deck.

"All right," I replied, ringing the gong to stop her.

I went forward, and saw that the chase was headed for a coal-wharf. I went into the pilot-house, and took the wheel from Ellie, who had been steering for the last hour. I made a landing

at a wharf a few rods below that where the Islander had gone in, and made fast. I concluded that Captain Braceback intended to fill up his bunkers in order to be prepared for any emergency; and I lost no time in doing the same thing. With one day's supply of fuel more than we had, the chase might lead us about the lakes for a couple of days, and then give us the slip when we had not the power to follow him. I felt that I was too smart to be caught in any such trap. It was the mate's duty to attend to the work of coaling; and, while he was so employed, I left him, with Bob Washburn to have an eye upon his actions. I wanted to take a look at the Islander, and Ellie and I walked up to her berth.

"Good-evening, Captain Alick," said the sailing-master of the Islander, as we approached.

"Good-evening, sir," I replied, utterly confounded by this stretch of civility on the part of Captain Braceback; for this was about the first time he had spoken to me since he had been discharged by the former owner of the Sylvania.

Of course I concluded that his civility was for a purpose; but I was not disposed to resent it on

that account. Possibly, as he had all my worldly possessions in his hands, he felt that he could afford to be civil to me; but it was more likely that he wanted to get some information out of me.

"How are you off for coal?" asked Captain Braceback in a tone as gentle as though we had been friends all our lives.

"I started with my bunkers full, as you did," I replied.

"Not quite correct, Captain Alick. We started from Lake Erie with our bunkers full, but not from Montomercy, as you did," said the captain, with a laugh, as though he had caught me in a blunder.

So far it was a blunder, for I had not taken it into consideration that he had run over a hundred miles with his supply before he started from Montomercy.

"You are right, Captain Braceback; but we are likely to leave Port Huron with about as many tons in one vessel as in the other."

"We shall try to keep about even with you. But where are you bound, Captain Alick?"

"We are out on a cruise; and it don't make

much difference to us where we go," I answered evasively.

"Well, it don't to me. My owners sent me out for a week to make sure that the Islander was in good condition for the summer; and, as this is my first season in her, I am anxious to get fully acquainted with her before I take any passengers on board."

"It is a good plan to know your craft well," I added.

"You handle the Sylvania exceedingly well, Captain Alick."

I thought this very kind of him. I was not much astonished when he invited me to go on board of the Islander, as I had never seen her. I considered a moment, and then decided to accept the invitation. I did not see that any harm could come to me in doing so, and I had a perfect confidence in my ability to take care of myself under all circumstances. We glanced at the arrangements on deck, and then descended to the cabin. Every thing was precisely like the Sylvania.

"Take a seat, Captain Alick," continued the captain of the Islander, as he dropped into a beneath the swinging light over the table.

I seated myself, and Ellie did the same. As I glanced at the captain, the first thing I noticed was that his clothes were even more richly bedaubed with yellow mud than the garments of his son.

"You gave us quite a smart run down the lake this afternoon, Captain Alick," said our host.

"Your son says the Islander can beat us; and I wanted to know about it," I answered, still studying the mud on his clothes.

"Does Lynch say that? He is much mistaken. The Sylvania has the reputation of being the fastest boat of the two," added the captain graciously. "And I think you got ahead of us this afternoon."

"I think so too," I replied confidently.

"No doubt of it," he added.

But I was not much interested in the conversation. I looked about the cabin for any thing that might add something to my knowledge of the situation. I particularly wondered where the valuable package was kept, for I was sure it was on board of the yacht. But I did not think it could be in the cabin. I spoke of the captain's state-room, and asked if it was like the same apartment on board of the Sylvania. Our host an-

swered that it was precisely the same thing; and then he invited us to visit it. We followed him on deck, and into the room indicated.

I glanced at the desk, which stood in the same relative position as my own. On the lid of it were some of those same stains of yellow mud.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BOOT ON THE OTHER LEG.

I WAS confident Captain Braceback did not suspect that those mud-stains had any relation to the stolen package; and Lynch was no wiser than his father. If either of them had understood the matter, he would have taken a great deal of pains to efface the stains. I had no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that the package was in that desk; not only because it was the most natural thing in the world for the robber to place it there, but because the mud-marks indicated that it had been laid upon the lid, probably while the possessor unlocked the desk.

Captain Braceback asked me a great many questions, all of which were intended to lead me into making a charge against him of taking the package, if I had missed it. I was determined not to afford him any information on the subject; but, on the contrary, to let him suppose I had not dis-

covered the loss. He wanted to know in particular if I had been up to Mr. Brickland's house after I landed at the wharf. I replied that I had been up for some clothes; and he seemed to be satisfied, though he presently resumed the investigation in another direction.

"Excuse me for five minutes," said the captain, suddenly rising from his seat: "I want to see about the coaling."

He went out of the state-room; but he had not been gone a moment before I had opened the desk, the key of which was in the lock. On the top of a bundle of papers in the large pigeon-hole on the left was the mud-stained package. I put it into my breast-pocket without the loss of an instant of time. I locked the desk as I had found it; though I did not leave the key in the lock, but tossed it out the window into the lake.

I had no further business on board of the Islander; and, without waiting for the return of Captain Braceback, I hastened upon the wharf. Ellie saw all that I had done; and I perceived that he was very much agitated in view of the possible consequences of my bold act.

"Don't be alarmed, Ellie: I will manage all this business," I said to him in a low tone.

"He will kill you for that," exclaimed my friend.

"He won't know any thing about it till he breaks open the desk," I replied, as I led the way back to the Sylvania.

"I am shaking all over, Alick," added Ellie.

"Don't shake any more: we have got the best of it just now. Hush up! follow me in behind this pile of lumber."

Though it was rather dark, I could distinctly make out, in a form approaching us from the direction of the wharf where the Sylvania lay, the person of Captain Braceback. This was the reason why I suddenly changed my tone and the subject of the conversation. It was plain enough to me that he had been to see the mate of the Sylvania. If he saw us, he took no notice of us; and, when he had passed, we hastened on our way to the boat. When we reached the wharf, I was not a little astonished to see that our steamer was swinging her head off from the pier.

"Some trick here, Ellie!" I exclaimed, — "hurry up!"

I broke into a run, and my companion kept close to me. When we were half way down the

wharf, I saw one of the shore-men cast off the stern-line of the Sylvania. At the same moment the gong rang, and the boat began to go ahead.

"Jump over the stern, Ellie! be quick about it!" I said to my companion.

It was not a long leap, and he made it without accident. I followed him; but, as the boat was at this time some little distance from the pier, I caught only by the ends of my finger-nails, as it were, on the rail. With two inches more to overcome, I should have gone overboard; and I should as it was, if Ellie had not taken one of my hands and assisted me.

"Who's there?" demanded Bob Washburn, as he came aft, whither his attention had been called by the yells of one of the coal-men.

"What's going on here, Bob?" I asked, as soon as I could gain breath enough to enable me to speak.

"Why, is that you, Captain Alick?" demanded Bob, evidently very much astonished, though I could see no reason why he should be.

"Of course it is: who else should it be?" I inquired. "What's up on board now?"

"I thought you were in the pilot-house."

"How could I be in the pilot-house when I was on shore?"

"That's what bothers me," replied Bob, taking off his cap, and rubbing his head. "Lynch said you were in the pilot-house; and that's all I know about it."

"Never mind; go forward, and don't say a word to the mate for a while," I continued.

"But what's up, Captain Alick?" asked Bob curiously.

"I have been on board of the Islander; and I sat talking with Captain Braceback, when he asked to be excused for a few minutes while he went to look out for the coaling of the vessel. It seems that he came over here, and told his son to start the Sylvania without me. That's the whole of it; and Lynch was going to run away with the steamer, so as to help his father out with the job he has undertaken. But don't say a word to Lynch: he still believes I am on shore."

Bob went forward; and, as the mate was busy at the wheel, he had no chance to look about the vessel. He had no reason to suppose that his father's trick was not an entire success. I

did not exactly see how Lynch expected to get out of the scrape; for he knew that all on board were my friends, and would be true to my interests. But I concluded that he did not care to get out of it. All he wanted was to give the Islander time to get a good start down the St. Clair. But I was perfectly satisfied with the course he was steering.

"How are we coming out of this, Captain Alick?" asked Ellie, as soon as Bob had gone forward.

"It doesn't make any difference how we come out, Ellie," I replied, laughing. "Lynch thinks that you and I are on board of the Islander, and, I suppose, is waiting for Bob Washburn to discover that we are not on board of the Sylvania. I have no doubt he is prepared for the row that is likely to follow the discovery."

"Why don't you let him make the row after a while, just to see what he will do?" suggested Ellie, who had as much taste for fun as the average boy of his age.

"Good! I am willing to try it on. Gopher has lighted up all the state-rooms, as usual; and no one need know that we are not in them."

"But Ben Bowman and Moses Brickland may miss you, and make the row before we are ready," said Ellie.

"Bob can tell them and Professor Buckminister all about it. He will come aft soon, and I will post him up," I replied.

Just now I was exceedingly interested in the movements of the Islander. Both vessels had finished coaling about the time I left Captain Braceback's state-room; and there was no excuse for the Islander's remaining any longer at the wharf. She did not remain any longer than was necessary to enable the Sylvania to get fairly past her berth. Though I did not know what transpired on board of her at the time, I learned all the particulars afterwards; and, as they properly come in here, I will insert these details where they belong.

Captain Braceback did not intend to be absent, when he left, for more than five minutes. Possibly that was time enough to enable him to visit the adjoining wharf, and say all he had to say to his son. When Ellie and I dodged behind the pile of lumber in the darkness, to avoid him, he was making fast time. Before he could get on

board of the Islander he saw that the Sylvania was backing against her stern-line to throw her head off from the pier; and in another minute she was going ahead. At this moment Ellie and I jumped aboard of her. The mate was so busy looking out for the course of the boat that he had no thought for what was taking place at the stern.

Captain Braceback believed that he was a very shrewd and cunning man; and I think he was more than half right. He rushed down to his craft, and quietly directed one of his deck-hands to cast off the bow-line. There was but one door to the state-room where he had entertained us; and that opened from a little hall, which occupied the space not taken by the stairway leading down into the forward cabin. Passing into this entry from the main deck, the door on the left led into the pilot-house, and that on the right into the Captain's state-room, precisely as it was on board of the Sylvania.

When Captain Braceback went out of the room, leaving his visitors there, he closed the door behind him. The blinds of the two windows were closed; so that no one on the deck, if there had been any person there, could have seen what I was

doing. As I thought of it afterwards, I wondered he should have believed his guests, under the circumstances, would remain there any great length of time. As soon as he stepped on board, he hastened to the little hall, and turned the key in the state-room door.

As I told Ellie afterwards, I would have given something handsome to see Captain Braceback after he had turned that key. I have no doubt he rubbed his hands with delight, after the manner of the stage characters when they have done a shrewd thing. No doubt he felt like a hunter who has trapped a big wild animal. He was confident that he had me a prisoner, and very likely he intended to call it all a mistake when it suited his convenience to discover me locked into his room. At Detroit or at some other landing-place, he doubtless meant to let me go; but it would be at some point where I could not easily get back to the Sylvania.

By the time he had "bagged his game," as he supposed, the head of the Islander was well out from the wharf, and he gave the order to cast off the stern-line. The steamer stood off from the shore; and, with her helm hard a-port, she soon

swung around so as to be headed down the river. I saw her do this part of her evening's work; and I understood the situation so well, I felt that I could almost hear the chuckle of the conspirator, as he started on his voyage down the river.

As my informant, who was the acting mate of the Islander, told me, Captain Braceback was in the highest spirits. But when the steamer had gone five or six miles down the river, the captain opened the door leading to the little hall from the pilot-house. He seemed to be listening, and waiting for something; but nothing occurred to disturb him. There was no outcry from the state-room where Ellie and I were supposed to be prisoners. At last the captain opened the door of the state-room, and found that it was empty. He could not tell his mate what he was doing, but he seemed to be very much disconcerted. He looked at the desk, and then looked for the key. An hour later he broke open the desk: the mate saw him do this, but did not understand why he had done it.

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE MATE ON WATCH.

I SAW the Islander on her way down the river, and she soon disappeared from sight. I concluded, from the direction she had taken, that Captain Braceback had not yet discovered that the package had again changed hands. He might think that he had locked the desk and mislaid the key. He might not think to break open the desk till the next day, or even till he reached his destination, whatever it might be.

While Bob Washburn was forward, I concluded that Ellie and I would be safer from observation in the cabin than on deck; and we went below. By the telltale over the skylight, I saw that the Sylvania was headed north by east. This course would take her to Cove-Island light, at the entrance of Georgian Bay, one hundred and seventy miles from Port Huron. I supposed he had taken this course by direction of his father.

While I was in the cabin, Professor Buckminster came out of his state-room; and I took the opportunity to tell him all that had happened. He did not take much interest in the affairs of the steamer; but he laughed heartily when I told him my story, and intimated that Lynch supposed I was on shore. He volunteered to call Moses, and to tell Ben Bowman the state of the case.

Later in the evening we had a visit from Bob Washburn, who had been on duty all the time since we saw him before. He had asked the mate's permission to come below for his overcoat. Lynch had been at the wheel all the time; Ben Bowman was on the bowsprit, keeping the lookout; and Bob had spent his time in the pilot-house with the mate.

"Does Lynch say any thing, Bob?" I asked, as he stood at the door of the large state-room which was reserved for my use when I chose to occupy it.

"He don't say much," replied Bob, laughing. "He keeps wondering where Captain Alick is."

"Where does he say I am?" I inquired.

"He says you are in your state-room; and I noticed, as I came by the door, that it was locked.

I suppose he secured it in order to prevent any fellow from going in there to find out that you are not there," added Bob, chuckling.

"All right! Do you know where the key of my state-room is?"

"I haven't the least idea, though I suppose it must be in Lynch's pocket."

"Can't you get it by some means, Bob?"

"I don't see how I can. Of course Lynch is not going to let anybody open the door of that room till he is ready to have us know that Captain Alick is not on board of the Sylvania."

"But there is another key: we have two for every lock on board. What did I do with the other?" I continued, musing. "Oh, I remember! It hangs on a nail, on the casing by the side of the window on the starboard side."

I showed him how he could unfasten the blind on the outside with the aid of a stick, and obtain the key. He went on deck, and in a few minutes returned with the article.

"Now, Ellie, you can go to your state-room, and turn in," I continued, preparing to take possession of my room on deck.

"But I want to see the fun when it comes off," protested Ellie.

"Probably there won't be any to-night. If I can get into my room without being seen, very likely Lynch will let me stay there all night; for it is plain sailing, and the weather is all that can be desired."

"I will tell you how you can get into the room, Captain Alick," interposed Bob, rubbing his closely shaved head, as he was apt to do when he had a bright idea or when he was perplexed.

"What is it?" I asked.

"He told me to ask Gopher to have a lunch for him, as the captain evidently intends to keep him at the wheel all night. I will tell the steward to have the lunch on the cabin table; and, while he is stowing it away, I shall be at the wheel, and you can get into your room without any trouble."

"All right; but of course I must get out of the cabin before he comes down."

"Certainly: you can hide in the engine-room."

In a few minutes the steward appeared with a tray bearing the lunch for the mate, which he arranged on the table. When he had done all, and looked the table over to assure himself that it was all right, he started up the ladder to call the mate. I followed him up the steps; and, as he went

to port, I took the starboard side. Moses gave me a hearty welcome to his quarters, and I concealed myself behind the boiler. I had a little talk with him, till the conversation was interrupted by the step of the mate on the deck. Lynch did not stop on the way to the cabin: very likely he was hungry, and thinking only of the needs of his stomach, though I am inclined to believe he was thinking more about me than he was of the needs of his inner man.

"The coast is all clear," said Bob, as I showed myself at the door of the pilot-house.

"Does Lynch say any thing more about me?" asked.

"Yes: he said he thought you must have gone to sleep. I told him he ought to call you," replied Bob, with his gaze fixed upon the compass, like a good helmsman.

"What did he say to that?"

"He said he would not call you if you didn't come out of your room till morning; and I don't believe he will. Then I asked him how he knew what course to steer. He answered that you had told him to keep her north by east; and that you said you were going to Lake Superior by the

north passage, so as to make a good part of the trip among the islands to the north of Manitouline."

"He invented all that; but of course he can't carry on the game without a multitude of lies," I added.

"How long will it be before we come up with the land on this tack, Captain Alick?"

"Seventeen hours from the time you left Port Huron, at our usual rate of speed, which is about ten miles an hour."

"All right: then we shall not go ashore in the night, if the mate should leave me at the wheel while he takes his nap."

"It is plain sailing: keep her north by east, and you won't be up with the land till about two o'clock to-morrow afternoon."

I deemed it prudent by this time to unlock my door, and go into my state-room. The light by the desk and chart-table was burning, and the room was as cheerful as I had always found it; and I am free to say it was "the dearest spot on earth to me." The chart of Lake Huron, which I had laid out on the table in the afternoon, was not where I had left it. I concluded that Lynch

had taken it out of my room for use during the night. I did not want it just then; and as the mate had taken upon himself the navigation of the steamer for the next few hours, be it more or less, I was glad he had taken the precaution to secure the chart.

Nearly one-half of the door of my room was a blind, with close slats, for the better ventilation of the apartment. When I heard the step of the mate on the deck outside, I seated myself in a chair near this blind. I wanted to hear what was done and said. The door of the pilot-house was generally fastened open, as I noticed that it was when I was talking with Bob at the wheel.

"I feel better, Bob," said Lynch as he entered the pilot-house. "A lunch at this hour, when a fellow is to sit up all night, makes him wide awake."

"How do you know you are to sit up all night? That isn't the way they do on board ship, I believe," replied Bob. "The captain will not sleep all night, if he is asleep now."

"But Captain Alick told me he was tired out, completely used up, and he thought he should turn in and sleep all night after we got on this

tack," continued Lynch, who had evidently made up his mind not to let my absence be discovered till the next morning.

"Is that so? I haven't seen him since we left Port Huron. I supposed he would divide the hands into watches, and let us know who were to sit up all night, if any, and who were to relieve those on duty. By the way, where is Ellie Dykeman? I haven't seen him either since we sailed from the river."

"Very likely he has turned in also," replied Lynch. "The fellows got up very early in the morning, and I don't blame them for being sleepy," replied the mate, with proper consideration for those under him.

"But we ought to have some arrangements for the night," suggested Bob, who was evidently enjoying himself by exercising the inventive ability of the mate.

"We can get along well enough for to-night without any arrangements. We have nothing to do but steer the boat; and you and I can do that as well as half a dozen fellows, and have all the fun to ourselves," said Lynch. "You can take a nap now for a couple of hours, and then relieve me."

"But I don't like this way of doing things; and I think I will call Captain Alick," Bob replied, simply to torture the mate.

"Don't do it!"

"He won't like it if we don't call him; for I'm sure he didn't mean to sleep all night," persisted Bob, as he rose from his seat, and I heard him moving towards the door.

"Stop, Bob! I am the mate of this steamer, and I tell you not to call the captain. If he don't come out before midnight, I will see about calling him. He told me he did not wish to be waked up after he got asleep."

"Did he tell you so?"

"Of course he did."

"I don't believe it."

"Do you think I would lie about it?" demanded the mate indignantly.

"I didn't know but you might be telling fibs for the fun of it," said Bob. "I will ask him in the morning if he said that to you."

"You can ask him when you see him. Now camp down on the floor, and go to sleep, Bob."

"I can't sleep on this hard floor. I think I will go down to my room, and turn in, ship-shape and Bristol style."

"That won't do; for I should be left alone on deck."

"Then I will call Ellie. If he has slept a couple of hours, he will be all right to take his trick at the wheel."

"Don't call anybody: we are all right, Bob. If you can make up your bed on deck, so that I can call you in case any thing should happen, you may sleep all night with the rest of them."

"Well, I will see what I can do," answered Bob, yawning. "I will go down into the cabin, and take a lunch. Perhaps that will wake me up."

He went, and all was still in the pilot-house. I lay down in my berth then, and before I was aware of it I dropped asleep.

CHAPTER XXII.

BOUND FOR SAGINAW BAY.

AS Lynch Braceback had suggested, I was tired enough to turn in and sleep all night. In fact, I did, after eleven o'clock, just what he charged me with doing, — slept like a log, without a thought of the safety of the vessel. But then, with Moses Brickland at the engine, and the vessel headed away from the shore, there was no possible danger to be encountered.

When I woke, the thought that I was the captain of that steamer suddenly forced itself upon my mind, and I leaped from my berth. I was startled by the reflection that I had been guilty of a neglect of duty in sleeping away the whole night, as though I had been a passenger. It was a moment before the situation in which I had left things when I turned in came to my mind. Then it occurred to me that I was making more noise than was necessary, and I went to the door.

"Is that you, Captain Alick?" called Bob Washburn, who had evidently heard me when I leaped out of my berth.

"Yes: how are things this morning?" I replied.

"Just as we left them last night. Lynch turned in at two o'clock this morning; and, as he didn't like the soft side of a pine board, he went down to his state-room in the cabin. He told me, if any thing happened, to ring the gong to stop her, and that would wake him up," continued Bob. "I was just going in to call you; for there is a steamer to the southward of us."

"How far off?" I asked with interest.

"I should say that she was ten miles distant. I have just examined her with the glass, and she looks like the Islander," replied Bob.

"I expected to hear from her this morning. Captain Braceback has broken open the desk in his state-room, and made a discovery," I continued, as I unlocked the door of the room, and joined Bob in the pilot-house. "Where is the chart?"

He pointed to it, on the shelf forward of the wheel. I unrolled it, and proceeded to lay down

the position of the steamer by the dead reckoning. Our usual speed was ten miles an hour, a rate which provided for an economical expenditure of coal. This was fast enough, though the Sylvania could make twelve every hour in the day; but it required about a third as much more coal to obtain the additional two miles as for the first ten.

We were about twenty-five miles from the shore on either side, and we had made sixty miles since the boat left Port Huron. I looked through the glass at the steamer astern of us; and, though I could but just make her out, I was confident it was the Islander. Perhaps I should not have been so sure if I had not expected her about this time, as the almanac says.

"Make the course north-west by north, Bob," I continued, after I had finished and verified my calculations.

"North-west by north," repeated the helmsman. "I'll bet Lynch Braceback will be as mad as a hatter when he turns out, and looks at the telltale in the cabin."

"Very likely; but he will have time enough to cool off in the course of the day," I replied, laughing with Bob at the fun in prospect. "You gape as though you were sleepy, Bob."

"I am. I haven't slept more than three hours; and I am not used to that sort of thing," replied the wheelman, with another long gape.

"I will take the wheel while you call Ellie: he has had a good long nap, and is in condition to take the wheel for a few hours."

I took the helm, and Bob went for Ellie. While he was gone I examined the new situation. "The boot was on the other leg" now, and the Islander was chasing the Sylvania. Captain Braceback had discovered the loss of the valuable package, which was to be a fortune to him in the future, and to obtain which he had been plotting all winter and all the spring. I could not exactly understand what he expected to do if he overtook me; for certainly he could not claim that the package belonged to him, even if he could prove that I had taken it from the desk in his room.

The captain was a desperate man; and it was safer to keep out of his way than it was to attempt to resist him if he once obtained a foothold on the deck of the Sylvania. I had no doubt that if he came up with the Sylvania in a convenient place, such as many of the solitudes of the upper lakes

afforded, he would not scruple to run her down, to board and search her, or to resort to any violent steps that would enable him to recover possession of the treasure. As I thought of the matter, I did not care to encounter him in the wilds of Manitouline Island or on the shores of Lake Superior.

I had changed the course of the steamer so that she was now headed directly for the Detour Passage, between Drummond Island and the main shore of the upper peninsula of Michigan. From this strait it was only fifty miles to Lake Superior. But I was not particularly pleased with the idea of being chased by the Islander, and of being in danger of assault or capture all the time. The treasure was locked up in my desk, and I was not willing to run any risk of losing it again.

While I was thinking of the matter Ellie took the wheel, and I made another examination of our pursuer. I found that the Islander had already changed her course to correspond with that of the Sylvania. Captain Braceback was evidently wide awake at that early hour of the morning. The clouds of dense black smoke above a

behind the Islander indicated that they were driving her; and I felt that it was time something was done on our boat. Before I left the pilot-house I glanced at the chart again.

"The Islander is after us, isn't she?" asked Ellie, with a long gape.

"She is; and of course, after what happened last night, I expected her," I replied.

"You have your package, and you don't care for her," added Ellie.

"But I do care for her. You don't suppose Captain Braceback has been looking for that package all winter to be ready to give it up now, do you?"

"Well, he can't help himself. You have the treasure; and that's the end of it."

"Perhaps not. Suppose he should catch us at anchor in some unfrequented part of the lake. Do you suppose he would make any bones of coming on board the Sylvania, and taking the package if he could find it?"

"You mustn't let him find it, Captain Alick."

"If it were on board, I don't see how I could help myself. He would turn the vessel inside out to find it. I wish it was in some safe place."

Just then it occurred to me that I might find a safer place than the steamer for it. I had been up Saginaw Bay several times, and I felt quite at home in that part of the lake. I had been to the bank in Bay City with Captain Boomsby; and I thought that the treasure would be safer there than in my desk. But I did not exactly like the idea of leaving it there. My old enemy lived near; and, if he found by any mishap that I had something in the bank, he might put in his claim to be my guardian again.

"One thing is certain, Ellie," I continued, after I had mused a while: "it won't do for us to be caught in any out-of-the-way place with that package on board."

"You don't think Captain Bracèback would take it from you by force, do you?" asked Ellie.

"I know he would, if he got the chance; and I must take care not to give him the opportunity. While the Islander is near, I shall keep the Sylvania in the regions of civilization. Make the course west-north-west, Ellie."

"Where are you going now?"

"Up Saginaw Bay."

"West-north-west it is," replied Ellie, as he

changed the course of the steamer to the direction indicated. "I never went up that bay; and I should like to see what there is up there."

"I would rather have it out up there than in a more lonely place," I replied, as I left the pilot-house.

I made my way to the engine-room, where I found Ben Bowman on duty. In reply to my question as to how fast the boat was going, he said she was doing her ten miles an hour, as indicated by the number of revolutions made by the crank in a minute.

"She don't vary ten feet from it in an hour when the wind is light, as it is this morning," added Ben.

"I want you to give her another mile to the hour," I continued.

"I can give her two if you wish it."

"Only one."

It was not my intention to run away from the Islander, only to keep at a respectful distance from her. Before I left the engine-room, I saw a Railroad Guide on the seat, which belonged to Moses Brickland. I picked it up, for it suggested an idea to me. I carried it into my state-room,

and studied it attentively for half an hour. My mind was made up as to what I should do with the package.

The morning passed off without any incident till about six o'clock, when the light on Point Aux Barques was in sight on the port bow. The Islander had promptly changed her course the second time when the Sylvania did so. This alteration had given the Islander all the advantage, and at six o'clock she was within three miles of the Sylvania. As she was evidently making about twelve miles an hour, while we were doing but eleven, it was plain enough that she would overhaul us in three hours, unless we gave our boat more steam.

I went to the engine-room to attend to this matter, and found that Moses had just turned out. I told him what I wanted, and he at once began to shovel the coal into the furnaces. Then I went astern to take a look at the pursuer. As I came to the companion-way I heard Lynch Braceback talking rather loud to Bob Washburn, who had gone to sleep in one of the berths in the cabin.

"What does all this mean?" demanded the mate angrily.

"What mean?" inquired Bob, who did not seem to be more than half awake.

"What are you doing here, when I left you in charge of the wheel?"

"I felt as though I needed a little sleep," pleaded Bob.

"Who has changed the course of the boat?" demanded Lynch; and, as I looked through the skylight into the cabin, I saw that he was examining the telltale.

"How is she headed?" asked Bob innocently.

"West-north-west."

"Is that so? I don't know who did that," protested Bob, with entire truth. "I think we had better go to the pilot-house, and see about it."

The mate had not finished dressing himself; and I concluded to be in the pilot-house when he and Bob went there to see about it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A NIGHT TRIP TO MONTOMERCY.

I SAW that Bob Washburn anticipated some fun, and he was wide awake by this time. I told Ellie that the mate was coming; and I assured him Lynch would be the most astonished mate on the lake when he did come.

"No doubt he thinks you and I are still at Point Huron, looking out for a passage in some steamer bound to the north," I added, laughing.

"But he can see the Islander only three miles astern of us," suggested Ellie.

"He won't be likely to notice her at first, for there are several vessels coming up from the southward," I replied.

I seated myself in the corner of the pilot-house, where the mate could not see me at first, and waited for him to make his appearance. But Bob came first.

"He's coming!" said Bob impressively, as he

entered the pilot-house. "Where are you going now?"

"Up Saginaw Bay," I replied. "The Islander is after us: she has been chasing us since four o'clock this morning. You may take the wheel, Bob. — Ellie, come over here."

I placed him by my side, so that the mate would not be likely to notice us when he came in. By this time Moses had got up more steam, and the Sylvania was shaking under the increased pressure.

"What does all this mean?" demanded Lynch, rushing into the pilot-house. "The course I gave you was north by east when I turned in. Who has changed it?"

"The captain of the Sylvania, I suppose," replied Bob, chuckling at the situation.

"Good-morning, Lynch," I interposed at this moment, as the mate turned his eyes in the direction where I was seated. "How do you find yourself this morning?"

He started as though he had been shot.

"What, Captain Alick! are you here?" exclaimed Lynch, falling back as though a ghost had suddenly appeared to him.

"Of course I'm here: where else should I be?" I replied, laughing. "'When duty calls we're wide awake, early in the morning.'"

I was not much of a singer; but my song seemed to fit the occasion in this instance. The mate stared at me, and then at Ellie. Neither of us had any business to be on board of the Sylvania when Lynch and his father had plotted to keep us on board of the Islander.

"I thought you were asleep in your state-room. You didn't give me any orders to wake you during the night, and so I didn't disturb you," stammered Lynch, seeing that his unfortunate exclamation had committed him.

"You didn't expect me to sleep all day, did you?" I replied. "I turned out at four o'clock in the morning, and have been on deck two hours now."

"I see you have changed the course, Captain Alick," said the mate, looking into the binnacle

"I didn't give out any course last night after we left Port Huron. But then, Lynch, I was aware that you knew all about the lakes, and it was not necessary to give one out when you were on board."

Ellie and Bob both laughed heartily at the way I was managing the situation. The mate was so confused and confounded by my appearance on board when I ought to have been down in St. Clair Lake by this time, that he hardly knew what to say.

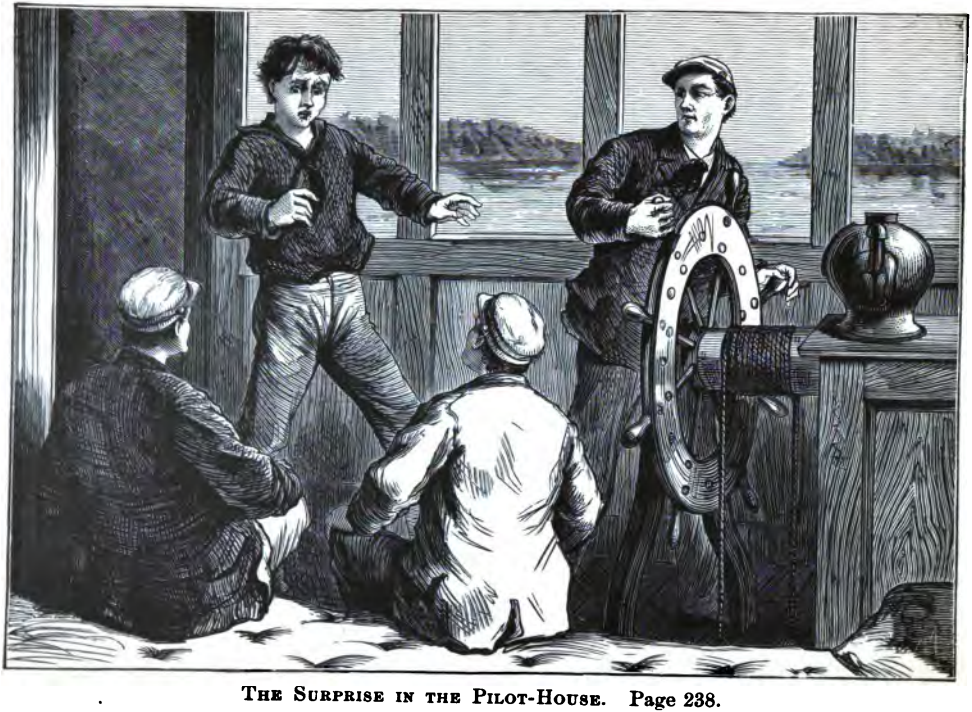
"You did not come into the pilot-house after we left port last night, and I concluded that you had gone to sleep in your room. But you had spoken of going to Lake Superior by the way of Georgian Bay and the north passage, and I thought I would head her in that direction."

"Oh! it was all right, Lynch. I don't find any fault: you managed it first-rate. But you came very near leaving Ellie and me on the wharf at Port Huron last night."

"I did!" exclaimed Lynch.

"I suppose you started the boat before we got on board. I know I didn't give any orders to start her. However, it is all right. I like to have the fellows prompt in getting under way."

"But I thought you were in your state-room all the time," protested the mate. "I say, Bob Washburn, didn't I tell you that Captain Alick was in his room just after we started?"



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"Of course you did; and you knew he was there, every time," replied Bob.

"Of course I knew he was there if I told you he was. There wasn't any need of lying about it."

"Certainly not; no need of lying about it at all. I knew the captain was in his state-room," continued Bob, doing his best to worry the bewildered mate. "I saw him there while you were taking your lunch in the cabin."

Lynch saw that he was the victim of some kind of a conspiracy; but he could not understand it, and therefore he was afraid to say much more.

"I must say, Lynch, that I don't believe in your starting the boat without any orders to do so from the captain," I continued seriously.

"I didn't mean to do any thing that was not right" —

"Of course you didn't!" I added with emphasis. "If a fellow means right, not much fault ought to be found with him; and for that reason I only remarked, in the gentlest possible manner, that I did not believe in the mate's starting the boat without an order from the captain."

"I don't believe in it either; but then, I am

rather new to this business of being a mate. I was saying I didn't mean to do any thing that was not right. After we had finished taking in the coal, I went on board, and into the pilot-house. I didn't think you wanted to stay there all night, and so I told Bob to cast off the bow-line: didn't I, Bob?

"Not the least doubt of it, Lynch; and, as I would as soon think of jumping overboard in a dark night as of disobeying an order given me by the mate, I cast off the bow-line," replied Bob.

"Then I backed her. I knew you were in your state-room all the time, Captain Alick, and, if you objected, you would let me know. I confess that I didn't think any thing about the order from you. It seemed to me to be a matter of course, that when we had taken in the coal we were to go ahead again."

"Not without an order from the captain, if the boat had staid there all night."

"I understand that now; and of course I shall never start her again without an order. As soon as her head was pointed out into the river, I sent Bob aft to see that the stern-line was cast off: didn't I, Bob?"

"No doubt of it, Lynch; and, after you had rang her ahead, I had just time to pull Captain Alick and Ellie on board," added Bob.

"I thought Captain Alick was in his state-room. I didn't see him after he gave me the money to pay for the coal," persisted the mate.

"No: he didn't go to his state-room till you went below for your lunch."

"But didn't you see your father last evening, Lynch?" I asked in a careless way.

"Just for a minute: he came on the wharf while I was paying the man for the coal."

"Then you didn't see so much of him as I did; for I made him a call, and was very handsomely treated on board of the Islander. He was very polite, and asked to be excused for five minutes; and I suppose that was the time when he came over to see you."

"He said you had called upon him," replied the mate, now knowing what it was prudent for him to say.

"Did he tell you where he was going with the Islander?"

"He said he was going back to Lake Erie. He gave it up that the Sylvania had beaten his boat.

He left the wharf about the time we did, and went down the river."

"I think he didn't go far," I added, satisfied by this time that Lynch had not discovered the Islander astern of us.

"He is in Detroit River by this time."

"I think not," I answered, pointing out of the rear windows of the pilot-house at the other steamer. "There she is; and she has been chasing us since four o'clock this morning."

"What in the world does that mean?" And I had no doubt that the mate was thoroughly astonished to see his father's steamer so near us.

"Probably your father has concluded that he would like to try the speed of the Sylvania again," I replied.

"Why should he do that when he admits that we can beat him?"

"Your father knows what he is about; and when you see him he will explain his actions to you," I added, willing to drop the subject here.

I left the pilot-house, followed by Ellie. Moses Brickland had increased the speed of the steamer till it was evident to me that the Islander was no longer gaining upon us. She followed us into

Saginaw Bay, and at one o'clock the Sylvania went into the river. I had the wheel, and Ellie and Bob were with me in the pilot-house.

"I shall anchor in the river off Bay City," I said, "and you will remain there all night."

"What for?" asked Ellie.

"I shall take the train which leaves this place at about two o'clock for Detroit. You will not hint at what I am about to any one on board," I continued. "I will not take the risk of having that package on board any longer. If I do, I am afraid it will be taken from me by force before we return from Lake Superior."

"But suppose the Islander should come up as soon as you are gone? Captain Braceback may take a notion to something here," suggested he.

"No: he won't meddle with us here."

I was confident on this point. Off the town I anchored the Sylvania; and a boat in charge of Ellie put me on shore. I had transferred the precious package from the desk to my breast-pocket. It was time for the Islander to appear if she was coming up the river; but she was not yet to be seen. I discovered soon after I got on shore that she had anchored in the bend of the river, a mile below the town.

I reached the train in time to start for Detroit, but I did not go to that city. At the Grand Trunk junction I changed cars, and arrived at Montomercy at a few minutes after seven in the evening. Taking a carriage at the station, I reached Mr. Brickland's house in fifteen minutes more. The good man was astonished to see me; but it did not take ten minutes for me to tell my story, and put the package into his hands. He promised that it should be safely kept this time; and the next day he found a secure place for it in Detroit.

The carriage waited for me at the door, for the train started at ten minutes past nine for the junction. Here I found a sleeping-car; and, having disposed of the package, I slept like a log till the porter called me at half-past seven in the morning. At eight I went on board of the Sylvania.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ENEMY.

I HAD been absent seventeen hours. I was warmly greeted by my friends on board of the Sylvania. Lynch looked at me with a kind of suspicious aspect, as though he wondered what I was about all this time on shore; for I don't think he had any idea that I had been to Montomercy and back.

"Is every thing all right?" asked Ellie, after he had given me a cordial welcome on board.

"All right with me: how is it here?" I replied.

"Every thing has been as quiet as a tomb since you left. Bob and I have been on the watch all the time. Of course you saw the Islander before you left. She anchored where she is now just as you went on shore. I had hardly returned with the boat, and had it hoisted up to the davits, when I saw Captain Braceback

go on shore. He waited on the wharf all the afternoon, with an eye on the Sylvania. At dark he returned to his steamer. I think it is very likely he had us watched all night."

"Has Lynch been out of the steamer?" I asked.

"Not for a moment; and no one from the Islander has been near us," replied Ellie.

"I don't quite understand it," I continued, musing on what my friend had told me.

"I don't believe Captain Braceback knows that you went on shore. That's the only way I can explain his actions. If he had known you were on shore, he would not have watched on the wharf all the afternoon."

"I should think not."

"The Islander did not come to anchor in the river till you had left the Sylvania."

"But Captain Braceback must have seen your boat when you returned from the shore," I suggested.

"I don't believe he did. I think I was on board, and the boat hoisted up, by the time the Islander had her anchor down. You know you hurried off, the moment the screw stopped, in order to catch the train."

"Didn't Lynch say any thing?"

"Not a word. I think he was asleep all the afternoon."

"I wonder that Captain Braceback has not been on board, or that Lynch did not go down the river to see his father."

"Lynch did ask this morning where you had been all night; and Bob told him he thought you had gone to see your friends. Captain Boomsby lives somewhere in this part of the State, I believe you said."

"Yes; but I don't go to see the Boomsbys much," I replied, laughing.

My breakfast was waiting for me in the cabin and I directed the mate to get the anchor u while I was attending to it. In accordance wit the orders I had left the day before, Moses ha a full head of steam on. As soon as I had fi ished my morning meal, I hastened to the pil house. By this time the boat was ready to ahead, and I struck the bell. Having secu the anchor, Lynch took his place at the of the bowsprit, while Ellie and Bob joined at the wheel.

"The Islander is getting up her anchor,

Ellie, as the Sylvania began to move down the river.

"I see she is," I replied. "I suppose she will chase us all day, as she did yesterday; but the package is in a safe place, and I shall not hurry the boat."

Before we reached the berth of the Islander she was in motion; and it was evident that her anchor had been hove up to a short stay before we got under way. She ran down the river at full speed, for her captain was more familiar with the navigation than I was. I followed him out into Saginaw Bay; but he soon reduced his speed, so that the Sylvania came up with him about a mile from the light at the mouth of the river. At this point the Islander stopped her screw. I headed the Sylvania to the west, so as to give her a wide berth; but she immediately started again in the same direction, with the evident intention of cutting us off.

"What does she mean by that?" I mused, when the Islander had placed herself directly across our course.

"She means to stop us," replied Ellie.

"She won't do it just yet," I added, as I changed the course to the eastward.

As soon as our vessel was fairly headed on her new course, the other began to back, and succeeded in keeping in our track. I ran on till our craft was within a hundred feet of the Islander. Then I rang to stop and back her in season to avoid a collision. Was it possible that Captain Braceback intended to prevent the Sylvania from going down the bay?

"Sylvania, ahoy!" shouted Captain Braceback from the waist of the Islander.

"On board the Islander!" I replied.

"I want to see you for a few minutes, Captain Alick," continued the captain of the Islander.

"All right: here I am!" I called back.

"Come on board of the Islander."

"No, I thank you;" and I had no idea of being locked into a state-room again.

"Hold on a minute, and I will go on board of the Sylvania," he added.

I was not afraid of him, now that the package was no longer in my state-room. But I was determined to be very prudent; and I waited till the crew of the Islander had lowered the boat into the water. I made up my mind on the instant, if Captain Braceback attempted to come on board of

the vessel with two or three men, that I would not wait for him.

"Are you going to wait for him, Captain Alick?" asked Ellie.

"If he comes alone, I will: if two or three come with him, I shall keep out of his way," I replied.

"Three men are getting into the boat," said Ellie, with some excitement in his manner.

I rang the bell to back her; for I realized that three men, if they were disposed to be ugly, as I knew Captain Braceback was, could even capture the Sylvania, for we had no fighting material on board. I was not willing to risk a combat, for it was safer to run than it was to fight.

"What are you about?" yelled Captain Braceback, when he saw that the Sylvania was in motion again.

I made no reply, but kept the steamer backing towards the mouth of the river. It was easy enough to keep out of the way of the boat; and, when I had placed a reasonable distance between the Sylvania and the pursuers, I stopped her screw, and started her ahead. But, as soon as the people in charge of the Islander saw

her going to the west again, they proceeded to head me off once more.

"Why don't you stop her?" demanded Captain Braceback as we passed near the small boat.

"I don't want to see more than one of you at a time," I replied.

"What are you afraid of? But hold on, and I will go on board of you alone," added the captain.

The Islander was right in my path, and I had to stop the boat; but I backed her again, so that the boat with the three men could not board the Sylvania.

It looked to me just then as though we were to keep vibrating like a pendulum all day, waiting for a chance to get by the other steamer. But the small boat ran up to the Islander, and the two men with Captain Braceback left him, and went on board of her.

"I am alone now!" shouted the captain.

I rang to stop the screw.

"I don't believe he means any harm," said Ellie.

"I don't know that he does; but it's best to be on the safe side," I replied. "The Islander has two boats on her quarters, as well as the Sylvania; and, Ellie, I want you to keep your eye on that

other boat at the starboard quarter of the Islander. You can see it, can't you?"

"I can."

"If the hands on board of her attempt to lower it into the water, start the Sylvania, and head her to the westward."

"I see," replied Ellie as he placed himself at the wheel.

I had backed the boat so that she was headed in the direction indicated. I was just thinking that I might take a more decided step than had before occurred to me. I could run into the river again, and at Bay City charge my pursuer with the crime of stealing the package from the cellar of Mr. Brickland. But I was not sure that I could accomplish any thing in the absence of my guardian, as Captain Braceback was doubtless well known in that part of the State. But, before I could settle my mind on this question, Captain Braceback came alongside in the boat. Ben Bowman rigged the steps for him to come on deck, and I was on the quarter-deck to receive him as soon as he came over the rail.

"I am glad to see you, Captain Alick;" and the face of the robber was covered with smiles.

"I should like to know by what right you place your steamer in the path of the Sylvania," I replied with the question that was uppermost in my mind.

"I meant no harm: I only wanted to speak with you about a little matter," added the captain as gently as a lamb, and not at all like the lion I had taken him to be.

"If I can be of any service to you, you have only to say what it is."

"Suppose we walk into your state-room."

"Certainly, if you desire it;" and I led the way, for I could not afford to be less polite than he had been to me when I visited his steamer.

I gave him a chair, and wondered if he really had any business with me. He seated himself with great deliberation, and looked as pleasant as though I had been his best friend on earth.

"I was going to ask you about a little matter on board of the Islander the other night; but I forgot the name of the man I wished to inquire about, and I went out to ask what it was. When I came back, you had gone."

"I waited till I thought the Sylvania had finished coaling, and then left," I answered.

"I want to ask you about a man I think you

know very well," continued the captain, taking a memorandum-book from his pocket. "His name is Boomsby."

"Captain Boomsby! I knew him altogether too well," I added.

"What sort of a man is he, Captain Alick? Is he an honest man?" demanded my visitor.

"I don't think he is," I answered bluntly.

"You don't think so: well, that's bad," continued the inquirer, shaking his head as though I had given him a piece of bad news. "I never like to deal with any but honest men."

"Nor I either," I added heartily.

"Then we are agreed on that point. But I want to see this Boomsby. We were thinking of going into a little speculation in a steamer; or, at least, he wrote to me about the matter. I got his letter at Port Huron, where all my mail was forwarded to me. But I did not open it till late in the evening, when we were on the way down the St. Clair River. As soon as I saw what it was, I put back; and have come up to Saginaw to see him. I don't know just where he lives."

At this moment the gong sounded to go ahead.

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CHAPTER XXV.

A CLOSE SHAVE.

"WHAT does that mean?" demanded Captain Braceback, as he sprang to his feet when he felt the motion of the Sylvania.

"It means that the people on board of the Islander are getting out the other boat; and I expect more visitors than I wish to see on her deck to-day," I replied.

"Is that all?" added the captain with a smile.

"That's all."

"But am I to understand that you intend to carry me off in the Sylvania?"

"You may get into your boat whenever you wish to do so: I will stop long enough for you to do that," I answered.

My visitor went out upon deck. By this time the boat from the Islander was in the water, and pulling towards the Sylvania. Ellie rang the speed-bell, and the steamer began to rush through

the water. At the same time the Islander went ahead; and the two steamers were nearly abreast of each other.

"Return with that boat, and hoist it up at the davits!" shouted Captain Braceback.

The men obeyed; and, as soon as they put about, I rang to stop the engine of the Sylvania.

"That makes it all right, Captain Alick," said my visitor, as he led the way back to my room.

"That makes it all right," I added.

"What makes you so suspicious of me, my man?" asked the captain as he seated himself very near my desk.

"Because you have so much yellow mud on your garments, and because I saw some of the same yellow mud on the top of your desk on board of the Sylvania," I answered; and I thought both of us had been beating about the bush long enough.

"Yellow mud? what has that to do with the matter?" he asked, glancing at the yellow stains which clung to his pants and vest.

"Sometimes I don't like to see yellow mud on a man's clothes. I saw it on Lynch's pants and vest as soon as I came on board at Montomercy."

"But I don't understand you," pleaded the captain.

"I am sorry you don't; but I don't like people with yellow mud on their garments. That's all: I need not say any more."

"You are a queer fellow; and, if I didn't know you pretty well, I should say that you were crazy," continued the captain, with a sickly smile.

"A free country, and every man has a right to his own opinion."

"I didn't notice that mud on my clothes before you spoke of it," continued the visitor, glancing at the stains again.

"I noticed them on Lynch first, and then on you, and on your desk at Port Huron. I haven't any thing more to say about them now."

"But won't you explain what you mean? All you say is a riddle to me," persisted Captain Braceback.

"I don't believe it is."

"Well, we won't quarrel now, Captain Alick. You didn't tell me where this Captain Boomsby lives. I suppose you came up here to see him."

"He lives on a branch of the Saginaw River; and by feeling your way you can run almost up to

his house in the Islander," I replied; but I did not believe he wanted to see Captain Boomsby any more than I wanted to see him.

"Then how did you get to his house yesterday?"

"I didn't get to it. I haven't seen him this year; and I don't want to see him for ten years to come," I replied smartly.

"You didn't go to his house?" asked the captain, looking rather perplexed. "What did you go up to Bay City for, then?"

"I went up on a little business."

"But you did not do any business; for you did not leave the steamer, so far as I could learn."

"You staid on the wharf all the afternoon watching for me," I added, wishing to show him that we had not all been asleep on board the Sylvania.

"And it seems that you were so much afraid of me, that you did not go on shore because I was there," added the captain, with a sort of smile of triumph.

"I am satisfied, if you are, Captain Braceback," I replied. "Is there any thing more that I can tell you?"

"I supposed, if you came up to Bay City, you

would go on shore, and, as I wanted to see you about this Captain Boomsby, I waited for you to come on shore."

"I have told you all that you want to know about Captain Boomsby. He isn't an honest man, and you can't trust him. He lives up the river from the Saginaw, the first opening you come to on the east shore of the stream. Sound and feel your way; and, when you come to a house, it is his," I continued, rising.

"What sort of a desk is that you have, Captain Alick?" said my visitor, raising the lid. "It is just like mine."

"Exactly like it, but there is no yellow mud on this one, and I don't keep any valuable papers or money in it."

"What do you mean by that, Captain Alick?"

"I don't think you keep any such things in your desk now, Captain Braceback," I replied; and I was so good-natured as I thought of my visit to the Islander, that I could not help laughing.

"How many hands have you on board, Captain Alick?"

"Seven, all told."

"All of them boys?"

"Three of them will count as men. How many have you?"

"Six men, and no boys."

"Is there any thing more I can do for you, Captain Braceback?"

He asked some more questions; and, in reply to him, I said we were bound first to Lake Superior, and should be there some time the next day. He seemed to be very unwilling to leave the steamer. He kept his eyes wandering about the boat; and I have no doubt he was thinking of the lost package all the time, having no suspicion that it was not still on board the Sylvania. At last he went over the side into his boat. I saw that his lips were firmly set together as he picked up his oars, and pulled for the Islander. I was sure he meant mischief; and he would have searched the steamer if he could have got the other two men on board of her.

I supposed I should be permitted to depart in peace now. But, as the boat went up to the davits of the Islander, she was headed again to the west. Captain Braceback would not let me pass. I dodged about for a while in vain attempts

to get out into the bay. At last, in despair, I headed the Sylvania for the river. As we were about to enter the mouth of it, a large steamer came down.

The Islander was over to the eastward; and, as the steamer came out of the river, I placed the Sylvania abreast of her. She went ahead at full speed, but our boat was fast enough for her. Captain Braceback ran for her, perhaps hoping that the Sylvania might fall astern of her as she increased her speed. But we maintained our position alongside the passenger-boat, and not more than sixty feet from her, for I was not inclined to leave any space for the enemy to crawl in between us. But Captain Braceback seemed to be utterly reckless in his movements, and dashed on till a collision seemed to be imminent. Doubtless the pilot of the passenger-boat was astonished at the conduct of the officers of the little propeller.

"I believe the Islander will run into that boat!" exclaimed Ellie, much excited.

"I can't think Captain Braceback is reckless enough to do that, especially as he will not make any thing by it," I replied, trying to fathom the intentions of the enemy. "If he does it he will

only smash that steamer as well as his own, without doing us any harm. While he is afoul of her, we can get out of the way."

"He is certainly going into her," added Bob Washburn.

When a crash seemed to be inevitable, we heard the gong of the larger boat, followed by two bells to back her. Captain Braceback was a sharp operator; and his long experience enabled him to calculate upon the action of the pilot of the other boat with certainty. He had evidently accomplished what he played for, and appeared to be in a position to head off the Sylvania. But I was not disposed to give up the contest. As soon as I heard the bell of the passenger-boat, I threw the wheel hard over to starboard. We were going at full speed, and our little craft worked very lively.

"Don't let him run into us," said Ellie.

"We must take our chances now," I replied, trying to keep cool; but it was like freezing ice-cream in the oven of a cooking-stove.

"I think we are all right," added Bob. "We shall run ahead of her."

But it was a close shave; and the first satisfac

tory intimation I had, that we were not to be sunk in a collision, was a change in the course of the Islander. Captain Braceback evidently saw that his boat would pass astern of the Sylvania, and he put his helm to port.

"Give her all the steam you can, Moses!" I called through the speaking-tube to the engine-room.

The bow of the Islander lapped a few feet over the stern of the Sylvania, but her stem was twenty feet from our quarter. I had sent word to Moses, directing him to prepare for emergencies; and, when the boat began to shake and quiver, I was satisfied that he had all the steam it was safe to carry.

"Go aft, Bob, and keep your eye on the stem of the Islander," I continued, for I was unable to compare the relative positions of the two vessels. "Send me word how it is going with us."

Ellie went with him, for I needed no assistance, unless it was to watch Lynch. I saw that the mate was very nervous, and evidently wanted to do something to improve the chances of his father. I kept one eye on him all the time. He stood at the heel of the bowsprit, looking ahead as his duty

required him to do, but casting frequent glances at the position of his father's boat astern of us.

"Bob says we have gained a foot on the Islander," said Ellie, entering the pilot-house.

"All right: go aft, Ellie, and bring me word yourself when there is any further change in the positions of the two boats, and send Bob to me."

Bob Washburn had more nerve and decision of character than Ellie; and, when I noticed the increased nervousness of the mate, I wanted him near me. I observed that he had taken his hand from his pocket several times; and I thought his actions were rather suspicious. I was trying to think what he might possibly do to give the battle to his father, when he began to walk up and down the forecastle. In a few minutes I was confident he had his knife in his hand.

"Take the wheel, Bob: I think Lynch means mischief," I said to my companion.

"He has meant it all the time," replied Bob.

At this moment I saw the mate stooping down under the front wheels of the pilot-house. I knew then what he meant; and, leaping out the open window, I came down fairly on his back.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN EXCITING RUN TO THE NORTHWARD.

THE pilot-house of the Sylvania was two steps above the main deck, the space below it being thrown into the forward cabin. The sort of trunk on which the pilot-house was built formed a skylight, with swinging window-sashes on the front and on each side, by which the forward cabin received an abundance of light and air. The two windows in front were open. Between them passed down the two wheel-ropes, which were here joined to the chains and rods that connected with the rudder. I was satisfied that Lynch intended to cut these ropes; and this act of treason would render the vessel unmanageable, at least till we could ship a tiller, and get it in working order.

When I struck the mate, in dropping from the window of the pilot-house, I knocked him over on one side. As his hand came out from the window, I saw that he held a knife. But it was no easy

matter to cut off a three-quarter-inch rope, even with a sharp blade. I seized the mate by both hands; and, before he could recover from his surprise at the suddenness of the movement, I had taken the knife from him. When I had done this, I permitted him to rise.

"What are you about, Captain Alick?" demanded Lynch, panting with rage and the violence of his exertions, for he had struggled smartly in the brief contest between us.

"Keep her steady, Bob," I added, turning to the wheelman, for I was afraid his attention would be distracted by the scuffle on the forecastle.

"Steady," replied Bob.

"Now, what were you about, Lynch Braceback, with that knife?" I continued, looking the recreant mate in the face.

"If that's the way you treat the mate of the Sylvania, I think there will be a broken head round here somewhere," growled Lynch.

"So I think; and it won't be mine, but yours," I replied. "So you want to cut the wheel-rope, do you?"

"Who wants to cut the wheel-rope?"

"That's your little game. I will relieve you of

your duties as mate; and I am ready to have you go on board of your father's steamer as soon as there is a chance for you to do so."

"We are gaining on the Islander," said Ellie, reporting to me at this moment.

"Port the helm, Bob, and bring her gradually to north-west by north," I continued. "Keep watch of the Islander all the time, Ellie."

"What's the matter here, Captain Alick?" asked the messenger, who could not help seeing that a tempest was raging on the forecastle.

"Lynch has been trying to cut the wheel-ropes of the steamer; and I have concluded not to keep up the farce any longer. But go aft, Ellie, and let me know when the other boat makes any change in her course."

Ellie obeyed the order, though he was apparently unwilling to do so without knowing more about the difficulty forward.

"I haven't tried to cut the wheel-rope, Captain Alick," said Lynch doggedly. "I was reaching into the forward cabin for my coat that hangs there."

"Were you reaching for it with this knife?" I asked, holding up the instrument I had taken from him in the sharp affray.

"Yes, I was: my arm is not quite long enough to reach it, and I pieced it out with my knife," replied Lynch.

I looked through the window into the cabin. A coat was hanging on the opposite end of the trunk; but it belonged to Ben Bowman, who had one of the berths there. The nail on which it hung was six feet from the window, and he could hardly have reached it with a yard-stick, much less with a jack-knife.

"That coat don't belong to you: it is Ben Bowman's," I replied to his assertion.

"I don't care whose it was: I wanted it, for the air is chilly on the heel of the bowsprit," muttered Lynch.

I was afraid he had weakened the wheel-rope, and I bent over to examine it. I found he had partly cut off one of the strands, so that the material was fraying up around the wound. While I was looking at and feeling of the cut, the exmate suddenly pounced upon me, and began to hammer me with his fists. He hit me several times in the head before I could get up enough to make a decent resistance. But I was beginning to make a fair show for myself when Professor

Buckminster came forward; and, seeing that I was hardly holding my own, he seized Lynch by the collar, and dragged him off.

"How is this, Captain Alick?" demanded the man of letters, still holding the struggling traitor at arm's-length.

"He pitched into me while I was stooping down, and came behind me, so that I could not see what he was about," I pleaded, in excuse for getting the worst of it.

"And that's just the way he took me a little while ago," growled Lynch.

"He was trying to cut the wheel-ropes," I added. "He is a traitor to me and the vessel he sails in; and I shall get rid of him as soon as I can."

"What will you have done with him in the mean time?" asked the professor, still holding his prisoner.

"He ought to be put in irons for mutiny, and for being faithless to his trust as the mate of the Sylvania," I replied; and I was very indignant as I thought of the mischief he might have caused if he had succeeded in disabling the wheel even for a moment.

"If we haven't any irons, we have ropes enough; and we can make these answer the purpose," said the professor, with a smile.

At this the prisoner began to struggle, and to try to get away from his captor. But Mr. Buckminster was a strong man, and without much effort brought both of Lynch's hands together behind him. I procured a line, and made it fast around his wrists. The prisoner struggled till he was out of breath; but by this time I had made him fast to the rail abreast of the pilot-house.

"Father! father!" yelled the prisoner, as he discovered the Islander, with her sharp bow on the starboard quarter of the Sylvania.

"Let him yell: he can do no harm," said Professor Buckminster.

But I did not wish his father to think we were killing him. I should have been glad to get rid of him at that moment, but I did not mean to do him any harm. I walked aft, attended by the professor.

"Drive her all you can, Moses," I said to the engineer, as we passed the wheel-house.

"She is doing about all she can," replied Moses.

"He will not burst the boiler, will he?" asked the professor.

"No, sir: there is no danger of that," I replied, as we came to the quarter-deck. "We are gaining on the Islander, as we have done every time when we have driven the Sylvania."

The stem of the former was about ten feet astern of the latter; and I was entirely satisfied with the gain we had made. I was confident that we should leave her half a mile behind in an hour, if no accident happened to derange my calculations. But they were forcing the Islander to the utmost of her engine's capacity.

"Father! father!" yelled Lynch Braceback again, with all the strength of his lungs. "They are killing me!"

"What are you doing to my son?" demanded the captain of the Islander.

"Nothing at all!" I screamed in reply.

Again and again the ex-mate yelled to his father; but, like Casabianca's parent, he could not do any thing for him, though for a different reason. The wind had been very light when we came out of the river; but a strong breeze had sprung up from the south, which was increasing in force every instant. Though the Islander was rigged as a topsail schooner, like the Sylvania,

I had noticed that her sails, if she had any, were not bent on. The stiff breeze we were getting over the quarter suggested that we might use it to advantage.

"Can you spare Ben Bowman, Moses?" I asked, as I went forward to the engine-room.

"For a while; but I don't like to leave the engine to go into the fire-room, for you may want to stop her in a hurry," replied Moses. "But we have fire enough for ten or fifteen minutes."

I called Ben, and directed him and Ellie to lay aloft, and shake out the fore-topsail. It was a very unusual occurrence for us to carry any sail on the Sylvania; and we had hardly ever done it except for fun. But my companions were interested in the art of seamanship; and I had put on sail to please them, and to exercise them in setting and furling. Gopher, the steward and cook, was a sailor; and, when the topmen had loosed the sail, he and I handled the sheets, halyards, and braces. The fore-topsail was set in the same manner. Moving aft, we hauled out the mainsail, and shook out the gaff-topsail. To complete the work, we run up the jib and flying-jib.

The effect was seen immediately. The Syl-

vania heeled over on her port side; and, with all her sails drawing full, she began to shove herself through the water at a very lively rate. I had noticed before that her sails had a lifting effect upon the vessel so far as the bow was concerned. This settled the stern a little deeper in the water, so as to increase the force of the screw, even while she was heeled over so far by the action of the wind on the sails.

"We are gaining rapidly on the Islander now," said Bob Washburn, as he came upon the quarter-deck, Ellie having relieved him at the wheel.

"I think we are gaining two knots an hour on her," I answered, after I had watched the distance between the vessels for a time. "But I don't suppose that all the sail we can put on will help her more than a knot an hour."

"I should say it would increase the speed three or four miles an hour," added Bob.

"Not more than one and a half, at the most," I added. "The sails are more for ornament than for use; though, if the engine should break down, we could get into port with them."

I found, at the end of the first hour, we had not gained more than a mile and a half. But I was

entirely satisfied with the performance of the Sylvania. The passenger-boat we had passed had started her wheels as soon as the Islander had gone across her bow. She was evidently a very fast craft; for she had passed the Islander, and was now half-way up with the Sylvania. After watching her for a time, I was satisfied that her rate was about half-way between that of the Islander and that of the Sylvania. She could beat the former, but not the latter when carrying all sail in a breeze as fresh as that of the present time.

All day long we continued to drive the steamer; and at dark, when we were off Presqu' Ile Light, the Islander was more than ten miles astern of us, but the passenger-steamer was not more than five miles distant.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LYNCH HEARS THE WHOLE STORY.

THE wind had all died out, so that the lake was as calm as a millpond. We had furled all the sails, and I found by the movement of the passenger-steamer that our speed had been reduced fully two knots an hour; but I had told Moses before sunset not to crowd her so hard as he had been doing during the day.

"What are you going to do with me, Captain Alick?" asked Lynch Braceback, when we had made every thing snug for the day.

"I am going to get rid of you as soon as possible," I replied.

He was in a better frame of mind than he had been all day; for he was so ugly that I did not consider it prudent to release him from his confinement longer than to permit him to eat his dinner and supper, which he had taken under the supervision of the professor. He seemed to have

come to the conclusion that we had every thing in our own hands, and that it was useless to make any further resistance.

"What do you mean by getting rid of me, Captain Alick? I thought I was to go with you on this trip," continued Lynch in quite a subdued tone. "If I have done any thing out of the way, I am willing to apologize for it."

"I think it has gone too far to be settled by any apology," I added very decidedly. "It is clear enough now that you have been a traitor to me from the beginning."

"I don't know what you mean by that, Alick," said he, with one of his sickly smiles. "You made me mad by jumping down upon me from the window of the pilot-house, and I pitched into you. But I am sorry for it now; and I don't think we shall have any more trouble."

"Can you tell me why you tried to cut the wheel-rope?"

"You are entirely mistaken about that, Captain Alick. I had no more intention to cut the wheel-rope than you had."

"I don't want to use any hard words, Lynch; but I think you had. And I know as well as I

know any thing, that you cut the seizing on the wheel-rope the day we came out of the river."

"I cut it? That is a new thing to me!" exclaimed the ex-mate.

"It may be new to you, but it is not to the rest of us," I replied; and I took from my pocket the piece of spun-yarn by which the end of the rope had been secured to the spoke of the wheel. "That don't look as though it had been broken, does it?"

I pointed out the smooth end of the string, and assured him that spun-yarn did not break off as clean as that.

"You didn't say any thing to me about this before; and I did not know that I was under suspicion," he replied bitterly, as though he were the injured person rather than myself.

"I preferred to wait and see what else you would do; but some of us have been watching you from the moment you cut that seizing."

"Then it seems that you were looking for something out of the way; and of course you were bound to find it."

"It's of no use for you to look so innocent and lamblike, Lynch: I know you through and through

now," I added with no little indignation; for his hypocrisy was even worse than his treachery.

"I don't know what has come over you all at once, Captain Alick," muttered Lynch. "I am sure I haven't done any thing to merit this treatment."

"Considering the treachery and meanness of your conduct since we started on this excursion, I think you have been treated with the greatest generosity," I retorted.

"I can't see it."

"What do you think causes your father to act as he does with the Islander? I think he intended to run into the Sylvania, and sink her if he could. How do you explain his conduct?"

"I don't explain it. I am not responsible for what he does."

"But he is responsible for what you do."

"I don't think he is."

"I do; for you are acting under his instructions, and you have been ever since we came out of Glinten River."

"I don't understand what you mean, as I have said a dozen times before. If you want to say any thing, why don't you say it?" snarled Lynch,

struggling as rogues and rascals always do to avoid committing themselves.

"I have this to say: that, when that passenger-boat comes up with us, I shall put you on board of her."

"I won't go on board of her!" protested the culprit.

"Very well: I can't force you on board of her; but I can do the next best thing," I replied, as decidedly as he had spoken.

"What's that?"

"I shall put you on shore at the first land we come to; and that will be at Point Detour Light," I added, as I thought he had a right to know what was to be done with him.

"That is rather rough on me. You insisted that I should be the mate of the Sylvania; and now you are going to leave me in a desert place."

"We insisted that you should be the mate because the lot fell upon you. But that was before you got that mud on your clothes," I added sharply.

"What has the mud on my clothes to do with it? I didn't suppose I had to be a dandy because I was the mate of a little steamer," sneered Lynch. "What has the mud to do with it?"

"It has every thing to do with it. I don't think we need to mince the matter any more. Perhaps you can remember how you got that yellow mud on your clothes?"

"I haven't the least idea."

"By a singular coincidence, your father is daubed with the same mud; and he didn't seem to know where it came from. The desk in his state-room was also stained with it."

"Now you speak about it, I can recall where it came from. My mother has been complaining of the drain at our house in Montomercy; and father and I cleaned it out just before we left home."

"Your father did not remember that circumstance," I replied, smiling at the invention. "But I think you have mixed things a little."

"No, I haven't; and father will tell you the same thing, if you ask him. We went down into the cellar, and took up the sink-drain" —

"You went down into the cellar; but it was not in your father's house, but in that of Mr. Brickland. You dug up the brick pavement, and took out a package you found there. Your father carried it on board of the Islander with him."

"What are you talking about, Captain Alick?" demanded Lynch, his lips quivering, and his chest heaving with an emotion he could not wholly suppress.

"Shall I say it all over again?"

"I understood your words, of course; but I don't know what they mean," stammered Lynch.

"I mean just what I say. I noticed the mud on your clothes the moment I saw you on the wharf at Montomercy. I had missed the package which you and your father took. It is a State-prison offence for both of you."

"Do I understand you, Captain Alick, that you mean to charge my father and me with stealing something?" asked Lynch, struggling to look his indignation.

"I do charge you both with just that thing."

"My father and me?"

"Both of you."

"I should like to see you prove it."

"That is just the thing you would not like to have me do, Lynch; though I can do it."

"How can you do it?"

"I needn't show my hand till I get ready. You cut the seizing to disable the Sylvania, so that she

could not follow the Islander. Neither you nor your father knew whether or not I had discovered the loss of the package; but you meant to be on the safe side, and your father intended to get out of the way of our steamer as soon as possible. For this reason he went into the cove to the north of the river to wait till the Sylvania had got over into St. Clair River."

"You are making all this up as you go along, Captain Alick," added Lynch, with intense disgust on his face, though there was not so much of it in his heart.

"Perhaps I am; but what I say is just as well known to all on board, except Ben Bowman and Gopher, as it is to me. From the moment this steamer went out of the river, I was looking after the Islander. I supposed she had gone around Point Huron; and you did not know that she had not, as I judged from your actions."

"I hadn't any idea where she had gone, and I told you so at the time."

"You had not, and you spoke the truth. But, as soon as we saw her headed for the north pass, you were very nervous; and every fellow on board was watching you."

"I suppose there was nothing mean about that," said Lynch, turning up his nose.

"Nothing at all, when we had a traitor on board."

"You can call me a traitor while I am tied to the rail."

"I can, and I do," I added, not at all cut by his implied charge. "I am telling this story as much for your father as for you; for I think he will pick you up after we land you at Point Detour. As soon as I had the Sylvania headed for the south pass in order to cut off the Islander, you tried to disable our boat, so as to prevent us from overtaking your father, who had the stolen package with him. Then the Islander came about, and stood to the southward. I kept the Sylvania behind the three-master till your father supposed we were well up the south pass. Then we chased him almost to Detroit River, when he came about once more; and we followed him to Port Huron."

"I know all this as well as you do; but you said you were only trying to ascertain which was the faster boat. I didn't suppose you would lie about it."

"I did wish to know which was the faster boat.

I may say that I was very anxious to settle this question. At Port Huron I went on board of the Islander. Your father was very polite to me, as he had never been before."

"Because he always said you were a liar and a humbug; and I believe he was right," retorted Lynch.

"Thank you, Lynch. Your father invited me into his state-room; and, when I saw that his desk as well as his clothes were stained with yellow mud, I concluded that the package he and you had stolen was in that desk. He asked me to excuse him for five minutes: this was when he went over to tell you to start the Sylvania before I could get on board. You remember about this?"

"Go on: my hands are tied, and you can say any thing you like," growled Lynch.

"But I want you to remember this, and tell it to your father; for it will save him the trouble of following us all around Lake Superior."

"I shall not tell him any thing."

"Yes, you will: I will take the risk of this. In a word, I opened the desk, and took out the package. It was my property; and I had a right to it, wherever I found it."

"I see: you robbed my father's desk in the Islander. I understand now why he is chasing you all about," sneered Lynch.

"Any way you please. When your father supposed he had me safe in his state-room, he started for the south. But in the course of the night he ascertained that he had lost the package; and, putting about, he chased us up Saginaw River."

"I wonder he did not get an officer, and have you arrested for robbing his desk."

"He knew better than to do any thing of the kind. He did not even hint at such a thing when he came on board this morning. Now, you can tell him to-night, when he picks you up, that it is no use to follow me any longer, for the package is not on board of the Sylvania. When I went on shore at Bay City, I took the train for Montomercy; and before eight in the evening I had handed over that property to Mr. Brickland, who is my guardian. It is now deposited somewhere in Detroit for safe-keeping. That is the whole story; and your father will not be glad to hear it, though you had better tell him all about it. He intends to catch us in some quiet place on Lake Superior, and with his six men he will try to re-

cover the package by force. But he won't find it."

"Do you mean to tell me, Alick, that you went to Montomercy last night?" demanded Lynch.

"I left at two o'clock in the afternoon, and arrived at the Grand Trunk Junction at six, and at Montomercy at a little after seven."

"That is the biggest lie you have told yet! It is impossible to do any such thing; and if you have stolen any property from my father, as you confess you have, I shall advise him not to take any notice of this yarn."

"As you please. I have nothing more to say."

At ten in the evening we were off Point Detour; and, in spite of his protest and his struggles, we put Lynch Braceback on shore.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

INTO LAKE SUPERIOR.

I THINK all on board felt a very considerable relief as soon as Lynch was out of the vessel. He had been a restraint upon us all since we left Montomercy. The feeling that he was a traitor was uppermost in our minds; and we could not be happy in the presence of such a person.

I had never been through St. Mary's River; and, being a stranger to the navigation, I did not like to run in the night. But the Islander would appear in about an hour, and it was hardly prudent to anchor near the place where we had landed Lynch Braceback. The river was more than a mile wide, and no obstructions appeared on the chart. I kept the Sylvania going till I found a little bay, which had a background of woods beyond it.

When we had passed beyond a point which concealed the steamer from the view of the ex-

mate, I sent Ben Bowman into the fore-chains with the hand-lead. Slowly feeling the way into the little bay, I brought the Sylvania under the shadow of the woods where I was confident she could not be seen from the river. The anchor was let go, and the fires banked.

"Well, what are we going to do in here?" asked Ellie.

"We are going to stay here all night, if the Islander don't come in and drive us out," I replied.

"Do you suppose Lynch will succeed in attracting the attention of his father?" asked Bob Washburn.

"I have no doubt he will. I gave him matches and the material to make a fire; and he can yell loud enough to make his father hear," I answered.

"I should like to see whether the Islander picks him up or not," added Ellie. "I shouldn't wish to have him left there for any length of time, with nothing to eat."

"All right: we can soon learn whether his father takes him in or not," I continued, giving the order to lower one of the boats.

We got into the boat, Bob, Ellie, and myself.

Each of my companions took an oar, and I handled the tiller-lines. By this time Moses had got rid of all his spare steam, and the locality where we lay was as silent as a tomb. The wind had entirely subsided, and the surface of the water was as smooth as glass. We pulled out to the point, from which we could see down the river to the lake. The Islander was in plain sight, and not more than two miles distant. We had put Lynch ashore on a point of land half a mile above the light-house; and we found he had built a fire, as I had suggested to him.

We drew the boat up to the shore, and landed. Crossing the point of land, we obtained a better position to watch the movements of the approaching steamer. Though we were three-quarters of a mile from him, we could distinctly hear the yells of Lynch Braceback; and, if we could hear them, we were confident that Captain Braceback could also hear them, for the Islander was not half a mile from the point on which the fire was built.

"She is running in nearer the shore," said Ellie, as the Islander changed her course.

"They hear him," I added.

At a safe distance from the shore the Islander

stopped her screw, and we heard her captain hail the person on the land. Then a boat was got out, and in a few moments more Lynch was taken on board. The steamer went ahead again, going up the river.

"Now lie down, fellows," I said to my companions, suiting the action to the word. "The Islander may come very near to this point, and I wouldn't have her people see us for all the old shoes I have in the Sylvania."

"She isn't coming within half a mile of us," added Ellie, as he lay down by my side. "Do you think they can see the Sylvania?"

"I am sure they cannot; for she lies half a mile up the inlet, with a background of trees to hide her. Besides, Captain Braceback will be busy listening to Lynch's story.';

"May not Lynch have seen us go into this inlet?" asked the prudent Bob.

"I don't think he paid any attention to us after the Sylvania started her screw. He had enough to do to watch his father's vessel," I replied.

"Don't you believe, after Captain Braceback has heard Lynch's story, that he will give up the chase?" asked Ellie.

"I am afraid not. Lynch did not believe what I told him about conveying the package to Montomercy; and I hardly expect his father will be satisfied with this explanation."

We watched the movements of the Islander with intense interest. She passed within half a mile of the spot where we lay. She continued on her course without any variation, for her captain was perfectly familiar with the navigation of the river. In a few minutes we lost sight of her. We launched the boat again, and pulled back to the Sylvania. The excitement for the night was over; and we had nothing to do but turn in and sleep till daylight. Professor Buckminster insisted upon keeping the anchor watch, and I left him in charge of the steamer.

He called me at four o'clock in the morning, as I had requested. I turned out the engineer, and in half an hour we were ready to resume our voyage. With the chart before me, I had no difficulty about the navigation in the daytime. At ten o'clock we reached Sault St. Mary, the village on the American side at the foot of the rapids. I ran the Sylvania up to the wharf, where all vessels have to wait for a chance to pass through the canal.

I had confidently expected to find the Islander here, but she was not to be seen. Captain Braceback would ascertain that the Sylvania had not passed through the canal; and I had concluded that he would wait here for us. I went on shore; and, after making arrangements to coal my vessel, I inquired for the Islander. She had not gone through the canal, and had not even been up to the wharf. I tried to reason out the probable course of Captain Braceback, in order to show why he was not at the Sault. He knew that I was not acquainted with the navigation of the River St. Mary; and probably he had gone into some bay or stream to allow our boat to pass. I could explain the situation in no other way.

"Want a pilot?" said a rough-looking man, coming up to me, as I stood on the wharf, thinking out the matter.

A pilot was just what I did want. The man assured me he knew all about Lake Superior; and, finding his account of himself was satisfactory, I engaged him. He seemed to know everybody about the village, and I was confident that I had obtained the right man. As soon as the coal was put into the bunkers, our time came to go through

the canal. The new pilot took the wheel, and worked the boat into the lock with a degree of skill that increased my confidence in his ability to do all he had promised.

All on board the Sylvania were interested in the sights to be seen around the Sault. All hands had been watching the Indians at the foot of the rapids, who were catching whitefish in scoop-nets. While one man paddled the canoe as far into the boiling waters as he could, the other handled the scoop-net. It was very exciting business; but often the Indians scooped without getting a single fish. I did not see any one take more than two whitefish at a haul: and I had done much better than this off Thunder Bay with my peculiar bait.

All the way through the canal we could see the raging rapids; and we had a long reach of river beyond it. After the southerly blow of the day before, the wind had come round fresh from the north-west, and we found the weather about as cold as November at home; and more than once, though all hands had donned their heaviest clothing, I was glad to invade the cook's galley for the benefit of the warm air. As we passed out into the open lake, we found quite a heavy sea, which caused the

Sylvania to pitch and roll to such a degree that it made the professor sick.

"Where are you bound, Captain Alick?" asked the pilot, as I went into the pilot-house after warming myself at the stove.

"We are bound to have a good time," I replied; "and it don't make any difference where we go."

"Do you want to hunt, fish, or see places?" continued the pilot, with a broad grin.

"All three. We want to see all that is worth seeing about the lake."

"All right: then you must go to Michipicoten Island first. There you will get the finest scenery and the best of fishing on the lake."

This island was about a hundred miles from the foot of the lake; and at ten o'clock in the evening we saw its hills in the distance. About the same time we discovered the lights of a steamer astern of us; and I was satisfied it was the Islander.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AROUND LAKE SUPERIOR.

"DO you know that steamer astern of us, Flickers?" I asked the pilot.

"I can't make her out at this distance; but I suppose she is one of the Canadian boats that run up to the north shore," replied the pilot.

"I think not: she is not large enough to be a passenger-boat. Do you know the Islander?"

"Never heard of her."

"Do you propose to make a harbor to-night?" I asked, and I was a little anxious about the matter.

"In half an hour we shall be in Quebec harbor. Around it is the finest bit of country on the lake."

"Do you know your way into this harbor in the night?" I asked, a little nervously, for the island looked as black and dark as a dungeon.

"Just as well as I know the way into bed when I am at home," replied Flickers, with his peculiar grin.

I went to the stern to take another look at the approaching steamer. She was not more than a mile from the Sylvania by this time; and I wondered that we had not noticed her earlier, though we had seen the smoke of her furnaces before dark. Ellie was sure it was the Islander, and I had no doubt of it. Occasionally the flame poured out of her smoke-stack, and I saw that Captain Braceback was hurrying her. He must have come through the canal at least two hours after we did; and, as he could not have seen the Sylvania when he got into Lake Superior, I wondered how he had known so well in what direction to steer. Up to this time I had regarded myself as entirely safe from any intrusion on the part of the Islander, unless she happened to fall upon us by accident.

An hour later we were approaching a group of islands at the entrance of the harbor, with the Islander not more than half a mile distant from us. I was still at the stern, watching the steamer in chase, when I felt a harsh, grating sound beneath me. At the same moment the Sylvania stopped, and I saw that her bow was lifted up in the water at least a foot.

The Sylvania was hard and fast aground!

"I thought you knew your way into this harbor in the night!" I shouted to Flickers, as I went forward.

"So I do; and I have taken a steamer four times as big as this one into this port in the middle of the night, and over precisely the same water as we stick in to-night," replied the pilot; but I did not think he seemed to be much disturbed by the accident.

I took a pole, and sounded the depth forward. We were on a sandbank, and it was possible, as Flickers suggested, that it was of recent formation. While I was looking over the situation, I saw the Islander come up under the stern of the Sylvania; and I was not very much surprised when I heard her people give three cheers, as though our misfortune was a victory to them.

Flickers wanted a boat to examine the situation of the Sylvania; and, when one was lowered, I went into it with him. We sounded with the oars as we shoved the boat out towards the channel. Astern of her was very deep water, in which I was disgusted to see the Islander come to anchor. Flickers pulled the boat over to her; and she was not more than a hundred feet from the Sylvania.

"I'll pull you off in the morning, Captain Alick!" shouted Captain Braceback, in tones of derision, as we came near his vessel.

"And I will do all I can to help you out of the scrape," jeered Lynch. "You won't have as good a time there as I had on the point where you left me."

"You needn't go any nearer to the steamer, Flickers," I said to the pilot, for I did not care to hear any more blackguard talk.

"Well, Captain Alick, I have done all I can for you; and I reckon I'll go on board of the vessel, and see if there's any whiskey in her lockers," replied the pilot with an audible grin.

"Then I am to suppose your business up here was to put the Sylvania on that shoal," I added bitterly.

"Well, as to that, you can come to your own conclusions," answered Flickers, chuckling as he ran up the accommodation-steps of the Islander.

I pulled back to the Sylvania, and I think a more disgusted skipper of a small steamer never floated on the waters of Lake Superior. The boat was hoisted up at the davits, and all hands had an exciting discussion over the situation. Flickers

was another traitor. Captain Braceback, as I had supposed, got in behind an island when we passed, and sent the pilot to do the job he had just completed. We had either to fight, or submit to whatever the enemy chose to subject us. As we could not help ourselves, we all turned in except one to keep watch; and I took my first turn. On board of the Islander, all was still; and I had no doubt all hands had also turned in. I could not do any thing to help myself; and at three in the morning I called Bob Washburn, and went to sleep myself.

At daylight in the morning Bob called all hands, declaring that the Islander was getting out her boats. By the time I could get upon deck, Captain Braceback and five other men were climbing up the side of the Sylvania. The captain was the first to plant his foot on the deck.

"Good-morning, Captain Alick," said he, with the same good-natured expression he had bestowed upon me before.

"Good-morning, sir," I replied, trying to be as cheerful as he was.

"I always believed you were a liar and a hum-

bug, Captain Alick; but I did not think you would steal," Captain Braceback proceeded.

"Thank you, sir, for the compliment," I added.

"You robbed my desk while we were at Port Huron: you took a package belonging to me from it. I want that package," continued the captain, in a very decided tone.

"I suppose it is no use to discuss the question of the ownership of that package; but I confidently believed that it belonged to me, and not to you."

"That's very cool of you, Captain Alick!" sneered the pirate. "Perhaps, if it were worth while, you could explain how it happened to belong to you. But we haven't time to go into an argument; and they say you are a regular sea-lawyer, Captain Alick. You admit that you took it from my desk at Port Huron."

"I admit it," I answered, as little disposed to argue the case as he was.

"That's enough! you hear that?" he added, turning to his men.

"Make him give it up!" shouted the latter; and Lynch's voice was the loudest among them.

"The package is in Detroit now," I replied,

feeling that I had the best of the argument in this direction.

"Lynch told me all about that; and it is too thin," replied the captain. "We will proceed with the search."

And they did proceed with it. They spent fully two hours in ransacking the vessel from stem to stern. Not a drawer, locker, hole, or corner escaped their observation. They turned out the contents of every box and barrel, and even ripped up the carpets in the cabins. But they did not find what they were looking for: and this was my chief consolation. I gave them the keys of all the drawers and lockers, so as to save the damage of having them broken open.

If I had been disgusted before, Captain Braceback was so now. He began to threaten me; but I only repeated the story I had told before. I had conveyed the package to Montomercy while both steamers were anchored in Saginaw Bay.

"That is a lie, Captain Alick. It was impossible to do any such thing in the time you were in the river," protested Captain Braceback.

"I can show you that it was possible," I replied, producing the Railroad Guide I had borrowed of the engineer.

As he seemed to be willing to listen, I pointed out the time of the departure and connection of the trains I had taken in my night journey. I believed that I had convinced him: certainly the hard swearing he did was ample evidence of the fact. He proceeded to abuse me; and, as he was doing so, he happened to glance at the spanker-gaff. I had set the American flag at the peak, with the ensign down as a signal of distress; but I had not done it till I saw a steamer coming down from the north-west.

"What does that mean?" demanded the captain of the Islander, pointing to the signal.

"A signal of distress," I replied. "I set it when I saw that steamer coming. I am aground, and boarded by pirates."

"Pirates! you"—

I don't know what he would have said if the shrill scream of the steamer's whistle had not interrupted the remark. The Canadian boat had just come into view from behind an island; and she was not more than two miles from the Sylvania. Captain Braceback knew that he was in British waters, and that the English people have a habit of making a tremendous disturbance over

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any such little irregularities as that of which he had just been guilty. He hurried his men into the boat, and went on board of the Islander, though not till he had hauled down the signal at the peak. The anchor was weighed as expeditiously as possible, and in a few minutes the steamer was going towards the canal.

As soon as it was prudent to do so, I set the signal of distress again. The steamer had gone into the harbor; but she would soon appear. In half an hour she stopped her wheels within hailing distance of the Sylvania. Her commander could see what the matter was, and presently he backed his craft up to the position lately occupied by the Islander. Without asking any questions, he sent a hawser to our boat, with directions how and where to make it fast. Without much difficulty the Sylvania was hauled off the shoals. I paid the little bill of fifty dollars without grumbling, and the Canadian captain could not wait to hear my story. We went into Quebec harbor.

We had nothing more to fear from the Islander; and I was glad to escape with no worse consequences than the general derangement of every

thing on board of our boat. When we had anchored, everybody was employed in setting things to rights. The next day we went a-fishing. The reign of hilarity began. Professor Buckminster, who had not stepped on the land for three months before, joined us in our excursions on shore. We caught trout enough, as well as plenty of whitefish and siskowit.

From Michipicoten, we went to Nepigon Bay; and for two weeks we explored one of the wildest and most beautiful regions in America, catching the largest and gamiest trout I had ever seen. We were very far from any traces of civilization; and we camped in the woods, by broad lakes and wide streams. From this region we proceeded to Thunder Bay, and spent a day at Prince Arthur's Landing, then but a small village. Then we landed at Isle Royal, and steamed to Duluth. Following the south shore, we reached the canal, having visited all the places of interest on the lake. We made our contemplated trip around Lake Michigan; and by the middle of August we ran up Glinten River, and moored the Sylvania at the wharf in Montomercy.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BAD NEWS FROM DETROIT.

I WAS rather surprised to see that no one came from the house to welcome us after our return from the long cruise. We had been absent nearly seven weeks. As soon as the steamer was secured I walked up to the house. The servant-girl was at home, but none of the family. Mrs. Brickland had gone to Chicago three days before, to see her brother, who was dangerously sick, and her daughter had gone with her. Mr. Brickland had been called to Detroit the day before, by bad news; though she did not know what it was, and had no idea when he would return.

"How did the bad news come from Detroit?" I asked.

"I don't know, Captain Alick: I did not see any person, or any letters, come to the house," replied the girl. "But that reminds me that there are two letters for you in the hall."

"When did you first hear of any bad news?"

"Yesterday morning. Mr. Brickland had finished his breakfast, and was reading the newspapers while I cleared up the table. All of a sudden he jumped up, and said something was bad news, and he must go to Detroit right off. He went as soon as he had dressed; and that's all I know about it."

I went to the hall for the two letters. I saw they were from England. As I returned, the girl handed me a newspaper, saying it was the one my guardian was reading when he got the bad news. I took it, and walked down to the wharf. On the way I looked it over; but I could see nothing that I thought could be bad news to Mr. Brickland, unless it were a large fire which had destroyed several buildings. I looked over the three columns the account occupied; and I saw that the firm of Brooks and Keeper was mentioned. The senior partner was an old friend of Mr. Brickland; but I was not aware that my guardian had any particular interest in his business affairs. I noticed that the safe containing the books and papers of the firm had been destroyed by the falling of a wall upon it.

I decided at once to run down to Detroit, and ascertain what the bad news was. Moses was as much interested as I was, and Ellie and Bob were not yet tired of life on board of the Sylvania. After the Sylvania passed out of the river into the lake, I gave the helm to Ellie, and retired to my state-room with the two letters I had received at the house. The first was from my father, informing me that the suit had gone against him. Though my grandfather had recognized me as the son of his son, the evidence in relation to the marriage of my father to Olive Somerset was not considered sufficient in the courts.

But my father had appealed from the decision; and he confidently assured me that he should prevail in the end. For a new trial he could secure all the evidence needed; and he should leave for America in the course of the summer. I was not much interested in the question which called forth all the energies of my father. I opened the other letter, though not till a glance at the direction assured me that it was not from my father. It was from his business man, informing me that Sir Bent Garningham had been taken very ill immediately after the close of the trial,

the excitement of which had produced a complete nervous prostration.

I was alarmed at this intelligence; for my father was very dear to me for himself alone, and not at all for the wealth that might come through him to me. The business man thought he would be better as soon as he could obtain a little rest. Then he went on to give me the details of the suit. It appeared that a certain property was entailed upon the next of kin to the incumbent of the baronetcy, which a son of my father's younger brother claimed. The case had been tried in one of the lower courts on an action to recover a small portion of the rents of the estate.

I was more concerned about the result of the suit. When I was in England I learned that my father had been suspected of a tendency to insanity; and I dreaded any thing like a nervous disease. I was very anxious to receive another letter, which the business man had promised to write in a few days. I was very anxious, and I even thought of sailing for England in the next steamer. I forgot all about the bad news from Detroit until Moses came into my room, and asked if I were going up town to find his father. He

could not help seeing that I was very much disturbed, and I gave him the substance of the two letters before we went on shore. He was full of sympathy, and his kind words did me much good. I felt that I was giving way to my feelings; and I tried to brace up my nerves to meet whatever of trial and misfortune might be in store for me.

When we came out of the room we saw two gentlemen on the wharf, who seemed to be regarding the Sylvania with a great deal of interest. As we landed, they asked us a great many questions about her, which I answered as fully as the case required. I was glad to forget the sorrows of the moment; and I showed the two strangers all over the vessel, and they examined every part of her with the minutest care. When I told them, at parting, that the Sylvania was a private yacht, and could neither be bought nor hired, they seemed to be greatly disappointed; but they did not explain the reason why they were so deeply interested in the steamer.

We left them on the wharf still admiring the beautiful craft, and hastened to the scene of the late fire, hoping to ascertain where Mr. Brickland was to be found. Brooks and Keeper had taken

an office in a neighboring street, and here we found my guardian. His welcome was cordial; but I saw at once that Mr. Brickland was very sad, and very much depressed. He did not manifest any interest in our long cruise on Lake Superior.

"I never was sorry to see you before, Alick," said he gloomily. "I have done the best I could for you; but I have"—

"What is the matter, Mr. Brickland?" I asked, interrupting him. "Have you later news from my father?"

"I have no news from him; and I shall not dare to look him in the face when he comes to Montomercy again," replied my guardian bitterly.

"Why, what has happened? It can't be possible that you have done any thing wrong," I exclaimed, fearing that the bad news from Detroit might be even worse than I had anticipated.

"I have done wrong, Alick. After this you will despise and hate me," groaned my guardian; and the tears began to flow down his cheeks.

"No, sir! It is impossible for you to do any thing wrong;" and I believed all I said.

"You have saved your fortune only to lose it

again by my bad management. You knew that Captain Braceback and his son had been arrested?"

He wiped away the tears as he spoke; and for the moment his grief was moderated by the turning of his attention in another direction.

"No, sir: I had not heard of it," I replied.

"The Islander went up to Montomercy; and, when the captain and his son came on shore, I caused them both to be arrested. They are now in jail. I have collected all the evidence I could, and the lawyers say there can be no doubt of their conviction."

"Then they are likely to get what they deserve," I replied, my thoughts coming back to the bad news from Detroit.

"I wish that was all the news I had to tell you, Alick," groaned my guardian.

"I think you had better tell me what has happened at once; and, whatever it is, I am sure you are not to blame for any thing," I added.

"I put the package of bonds and other securities you brought down to me into the safe of my friend Brooks. I thought it would be all right there, for the safe was built into the wall."

"I see; but you are no more to blame for this than if the papers had been lost at sea in a hurricane," I protested warmly.

"Do you think I am not? I feel like a criminal."

"You need not feel so. You did the best you could for the safety of the package; and it is no more your fault than it is mine. It was burned in this fire, was it?"

"Every thing in the safe was destroyed. The fall upon it of the heavy wall of the next building crushed the ironwork as though it had been a bandbox. Not a thing in it was saved," replied Mr. Brickland, intensely agitated.

If the thought of my father had not made me sad, I should have laughed in his face. As it was, I succeeded in comforting him after a while. We went to his hotel, and talked over the situation. It was a very sad interview, made so only by the illness of my father. The bonds were not registered, and they were hopelessly lost. Captain Braceback knew the nature of the contents of the package, or he would not have taken the trouble to steal it. My guardian had made a careful inventory of the bonds and stocks belonging to me;

but it appeared that he had for several years kept his valuable papers in the safe of his friend in Detroit, and the list was in his little trunk burned with the rest of the contents of the safe. All I had in the world, except the Sylvania, was gone. I was now really "a poor boy" again.

In the afternoon Mr. Brickland returned in the steamer with us to Montomercy. It seemed almost as if the world had come to an end with me. My guardian was in no happier frame of mind. I had fought the battle with Captain Braceback for my earthly possessions; but the fire had robbed me of every thing. I had not thought to look at the dates of my letters from England; and when I looked at them again I found they had been written five and four weeks before. It was time for me to have another; and, for aught I knew, my father might already be in his grave.

But no letters came for several days. The cruise of the Sylvania was finished, and Ellie and Bob started for their homes. I had no more use for Professor Buckminster, who had been a sober man now for four months. I was afraid, if he went on shore again, that he would fall into his

old habit; and I had a long talk with him in the pilot-house of the steamer, where he chose to spend his time.

He produced a letter which he had obtained at the office, and showed it to me. It was from Mr. Buckminster, whose acquaintance I had made on the Hudson, and from whom I had fled at Albany. I learned for the first time that the old gentleman was his uncle. When I asked the professor if he had ever signed a pledge, he informed me that he had not, and then asked me to read this letter. It contained a draft for a hundred dollars, and invited his nephew to visit him at Newburgh. It appeared that the professor had promised his uncle never to drink another drop.

"That is the first pledge I ever took," said Mr. Buckminster; "and with God's help, I intend to keep it as long as I live."

As I read the rest of the letter, I found that the professor had told his uncle all about me; and the latter expressed in no stinted terms his obligations to me for the service I had rendered in saving the life of his daughter. He wished very much to see me again, and to do something to discharge his obligations.

"You say you are a poor boy again, Alick," said the professor. "My uncle is a very wealthy man; and you have only to let him know that you need assistance, and he will be too glad to help you with all you can need in this world."

"But I don't need any assistance. I am not a beggar, if I am a poor boy," I replied with energy. "I should as soon think of begging through the streets of Detroit as of asking your uncle for any help when I don't need it. I have the Sylvania yet; and I can make a living out of her. What would my father, Sir Bent Garningham, say if I should ask or accept money from any friends?"

"But the suits have gone against your father."

"Against me, but not against him, though he seems to think he shall be able to establish my claims. Whether he does or not, I can take care of myself."

"I am going to see my uncle, Alick. I feel that I owe more to you than to any other person living. I am sorry to leave you, and I would not do so if you were to continue your studies as before."

"Each of us had a use for the other. You have worked well for me; and though I can't

afford to pay you as much as you have been worth to me, I shall do all I can as we part."

"Come, come, Alick! that is a little too bad! I would no more take a cent from you for any thing I have done than I would from my own mother if I had one," added the professor reproachfully.

We discussed the matter a little. I had intended to pay him a hundred dollars out of the two hundred and fifty I had left after the cruise to Lake Superior. He was as resolute as I was; and in the end we had to call it square. The next day he departed for the East. He spent a year with his uncle, until his habit of abstinence was confirmed, and then he was restored to his position in the university. He was saved by the grace of God and his voluntary confinement on board of the Sylvania.

While we were talking about the past, Moses came on board to bring me a letter he had just obtained from the post-office. The heavy black seal upon it caused me to stagger to a stool for support. I need not say what I found in that letter when I had the strength and courage to open it. My poor father was no more.

For more than a week I was not myself. Mrs.

Brickland and Eva had returned from Chicago; and the whole family did all they could for me. I pass over that week; and it seems like a blank to me. Then came another letter from the business man of my father, informing me that my father left no will, and that I was wholly ignored by the family. He was ready to proceed in the courts to establish my rights if I instructed him to do so; but funds were necessary, even to make a beginning. The son of my father's younger brother had already assumed the title, and taken possession of the estates.

I had no funds except the two hundred and fifty dollars, the remainder of the sum I had saved for the summer trip. Mr. Brickland offered all he had; but I declined to have him risk a dollar of his property in any thing so uncertain as a lawsuit. I accepted the situation, and was ready to go to work and earn my own living, as I had been obliged to do in former years.

The next event of interest was the trial of Captain Braceback and his son for the stealing of the package. I was the principal witness. Before the time came, Lynch Braceback desired to see me, and I visited him at the jail, for the prisoners had not been able to obtain bail.

"Alick, my father has been the ruin of me," said Lynch bitterly. "You caused him to lose his situation as sailing-master of the Sylvania."

"I don't think so," I replied. "He lost his place by his want of care or skill in the management of the vessel."

"He insists that you were the cause of all his misfortunes; and when he moved to Montomercy he said he would ruin you in one way or another," continued Lynch. "He wanted to get you turned out of Somerset College first, and bring you into disgrace. He thought you would run away if they turned you out of the college."

"What good would that have done him?" I asked.

"As soon as you ran away, he intended to get that package, and then make it appear that you had taken it yourself from the bank. It was I who froze up the bell that cold morning, and sent you the note about Mr. Brickland's sickness. I set the sheds on fire, jumping out of the window into the lane after I had fixed the matches, the moment after you left the shed. I fixed the doctor's dog, and made it look as though you had done it."

Lynch spoke very glibly about these things, and did not seem to be particularly penitent. I concluded that he had a purpose to accomplish. I let him tell his story without any reproaches; for I knew he had injured himself more than he had me.

"I didn't want to do these things, but my father made me. I couldn't help myself," pleaded he.

"It was a hard case for you, Lynch; but I think I could have found a way to help myself."

"Perhaps you could, but I could not. My father always was a tyrant. You would not run away, as my father wanted you to do, even when you were turned out of the college. We knew when you took the package from the bank; and my father made me keep watch of you till I found out what you did with it. I had an eye on you about all the time, from the moment you took it from the bank till you buried it in the cellar."

"And I saw you hanging about the house the night we put it in the cellar."

"Yes; and I thought you had found me out then. My father left soon after to take charge of the Islander; and you know the rest of the story.

Now, Alick, it was not my fault that I did all this. I always liked you first-rate."

"I shall not find any fault with you now, Lynch."

"But you can do something to get me out of the scrape," said the culprit.

What could I do? He wished me to give my evidence so as not to prove any thing against him. But I could only tell the truth as it was. I would not have obeyed my father, or any other person who commanded me to commit a crime. The trial came on; and I told my story as I have related it in these pages. It was amply confirmed by Mr. Brickland, Moses, and others. Captain Braceback was sentenced to the State Prison for three years, and Lynch for three months. They had the worst of it; but I was sorry for Lynch. It was a terrible thing to have a father who could lead him into crime.

Only a few days after the trial I was not a little surprised to receive a visit from the two gentlemen who had so carefully looked over the Sylvania at Detroit on our return from Lake Superior. One of them was a young man, apparently not over twenty, while the other was

forty. Both of them were elegantly dressed; and they seemed to be cultivated people.

"I learned the other day that circumstances had changed somewhat with you, Captain Alick," said the elder of the two, "and that possibly you might be inclined to sell or allow us to charter the fine steam-yacht we saw at Detroit."

"The circumstances have changed, though I don't care to sell the Sylvania; for I expect to make a living out of her," I replied.

"The truth of it is, Captain Alick, this young gentleman is my ward; and he is possessed to take a cruise in a steam-yacht. As he has the means, I am not disposed to thwart him," continued the elder of the two. "Is this a sea-going yacht?"

"If she can stand the gales of the great lakes, she is good for any thing on the ocean," I replied.

"He has taken a fancy to the Sylvania; and he insists upon going in her, or a vessel just like her."

"Where does he wish to go?" I asked.

"He has been out of health, and has a vacation from college for a year. He must spend the next winter in the South."

"In the South!" I exclaimed.

"So the physicians say. He wants the yacht for a year. He desires to cruise along the Atlantic shores for the next six months."

This was the plan; and we made a bargain on the spot. We arranged the terms in detail afterwards; but in ten days from that time I was on the voyage to Florida by the way of Lake Erie, the Welland Canal, and the St. Lawrence River. In the excitement of preparing for the proposed long cruise, I almost forgot my sorrows and troubles. I asked no questions yet about my employer, though I found he had taken pains to ascertain all he could about me. But I am to tell the story of this long voyage in another volume.

After the trial Lynch Braceback told Dr. Rawley the story he had related to me, and confessed his guilt in regard to the three scrapes which had caused my expulsion from Somerset College. The doctor called upon me at once, and was as penitent as though he had been guilty of all the offences himself. He reinstated me after vacation; and I induced Ellie and Bob to return, though I could not be with them.

My story is finished; and another great change has come over my fortunes. Though I am right-

fully Sir Alexander Garningham. I don't say anything about that. I don't like the "handle" to my name, and prefer to be simply "Captain Alick" if I must have any title. I was not sorry to think of the prospect of sailing on the blue ocean again; though, in spite of the excitement and the anxiety of it, I had enjoyed the "Lake Breezes; or, The Cruise of the Sylvania."

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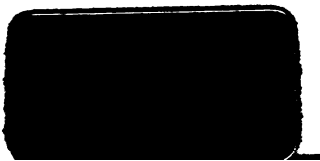
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